The ANTIOCH REVIEW

"Why should there not be a patient confidence in the ultimate justice of the people? Is there any better or equal hope in the world?"
—ABRAHAM LINCOLN

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Editors' Shop Talk

Something like three-fourths of all the unsolicited manuscripts which pass over our editorial desks are short stories. It's been said that everyone has one story in him, and some days when we go through our stack of mail we have the illusion that everybody or his brother has taken the time to write that story and send it to us. This plethora of choices should apparently make it simple to pick the two stories we try to publish every issue, but it doesn't. We never seem to accumulate a stockpile of fiction, and sometimes, as with this issue, we fall short of our modest goal.

* *

Just what kind of fiction are we looking for? That is probably a dangerous and/or embarrassing question to try to answer. Fiction is a deeply personal thing, almost as much so in its criticism as in its creation. We might tell what we are looking for, some ambitious writer might think he could fill the prescription (however generally it was given out), but when he brought or sent in his piece, we might say, "No, that wasn't what we had in mind!" Though there may be certain patterns in serious fiction, there aren't any formulas.

Editors have a habit (a reasonable one, we think) of telling prospective authors who query them to "read the magazine." But having noted that fact, we probably have the responsibility of being a little more specific. We don't care for "short shorts" or vignettes. We don't publish psychiatric case studies (of which the number written seems to be on the rise) or melodramas of violence. Within wide limits we favor stories of body or substance but not of plot in the sense the word is used by the "slicks." Given writing skill, we think a story should have above all else, some point or meaning. The writer should have something to say. For we believe that reading of fiction should be essentially an extension of experience.

* *

That "experience" of course, could be primarily aesthetic, and there are a hundred other little magazines to prove it. But we use the term in its commoner sense of life situations. Like James Farrell (see page 247), we favor fiction that is "representational."

It may be representational of almost anything in modern society that poses a problem or causes conflict. We have published our share of stories that deal with some phase of race relations. But to take another area quite as subtle and various, we receive almost nothing dealing with the home-career dilemma of most modern women.

To return to this issue, Alan Gillies' "Fire in the Furnace," we think, is representational of the modern little man who, in the words of Thoreau, leads a life of "quiet desperation." The theme, after all, is not new. But it seems to us to have particular relevance today. Charlie convinced us of his reality. And having come back to the personal or close to it, perhaps that's the place for us to bow out.

Toward Man's Maturity

By WILLIAM G. CARLETON

CONTEMPORARY MAN looks out upon his modern world and is afraid. Not since the declining days of the Roman Empire, not since the days of Boethius, have such universal dread and despair gripped the mind of the West.

Sometimes this fear rises to the frenzy of hysteria, as in Norman Cousins' *Modern Man is Obsolete*. Sometimes it descends to the ludicrous and the grotesque, as in the 1949 Waldorf Cultural and Scientific Conference for World Peace and the counter-meetings that conference provoked. And how very thick and deadly is the gloom may be seen in the fact that no Erasmus, no Montaigne, no Swift, no Voltaire has yet appeared to satirize in irony or in savage ridicule the cruelties, the barbarities, the superstitions, the irrationalities, the hates and the fears, the absurdities, and the glaring incongruities of our age.

Science and the machine have made a shambles of the old order. Long-established verities in religion, in family life, in morals, in standards of taste and beauty are dissolving. Old ruling classes are declining and even disappearing; new classes are emerging and rising to uneasy power. On the one hand, men fear an economic catastrophe like that of the 1930's; on the other hand, they fear the increasing social controls which might avert such a catastrophe. Democracy is in prolonged crisis: on the right it is threatened by those who fear that democracy is leading to socialism; on the left it is threatened by those who by swift and drastic methods would establish an extreme socialism. Those on the right indulge a dangerous and mystical worship of nation; those on the left indulge a dangerous and mystical worship of class. Everywhere collectivism steadily grows, posing in new and difficult ways the old problem of individual freedom. The national state is plainly inadequate to meet today's international problems and no new world order has risen to take its place. A changed imperialism is upon us, an imperialism which is dividing the

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world into two great empires—the Russian and the American—both mutually suspicious and hostile. It is an imperialism which deprives an increasingly large number of peoples of their independence and freedom, which substitutes a world of force for a world of consent, which limits the standards of living of peoples everywhere by diverting more and more wealth and goods from civilian and social services to armaments and war ends, which threatens us all with atomic war and ruin. Old institutions, old values, and old sanctions are disappearing; new institutions, new values, and new sanctions have yet to be established.

II

Men look upon this awful spectacle of a collapsing world and their mood is dominantly one of escape—escape from the rationalism of the eighteenth century, from the evolutionary concepts of the nineteenth century, from the pragmatism of the twentieth century; escape from science and the machine. But escape into what? Into nihilism. Into authority. Into romanticism and mysticism. Into the self.

Only the Communist believes in meeting the machine head-on; in subjecting and mastering it at once, but in trying to do this the Communist, too, takes flight into authority and surrounds his essential rationalism with a dangerous mythology. He has raised his system to the level of a universal, an emotional absolute. The Communist tells us we can solve the problems of the Machine Age now, completely, in all societies, in essentials forever, by cataclysmic revolution; by extreme socialism; by dictatorship; by authority which would apply class politics even to scholarship and, for the time at least, deny universal validity to some of the established (but always developing) truths of science; by acceptance of the great myth of the Heavenly City on Earth, the classless and groupless society, as the end-product of all history. (And thus in all seriousness we are asked to believe that the historical process of class and group conflict, in part discovered and emphasized by the Marxists themselves, will miraculously end with the triumph of Communism.)

At the other extreme, Spenglerians, believing that societies run through the necessary cycles of a biologic organism, tell us that we can do nothing to save ourselves. We are, they say, on the downward push of an inevitable historical cycle; we are at the beginning of a period

comparable to the late days of the last century of the Roman Republic—the period which in suffering and blood prepared the way for Caesarism and decadence. Our predestined lot is frustration, futility, nihilism.

To the fascists, politics and society become mere branches of the occult, and for the sober solution of the pressing problems of the Machine Age is substituted an irrational jumble of color, ritual, and viscera. The mystique of fascism is by now only too well known: dynamism and action for their own sake, the intuitive élite, the inspired leader, the romantic state, frenzied nationalism, the glorification of war and violence, brutal racism, blood and soil and mud and guts. That the religious nationalism of fascism still flourishes is evidenced by the Perón movement in Argentina, the revival of the Joan of Arc cult in France, the actions of the extremist Zionist groups in Palestine. In this connection, it is interesting to note that the manuscripts of the most acclaimed literary mystic of our time, Franz Kafka, now repose ceremoniously in sacred Jerusalem. (And thus the Jews have not been able to escape today's impulse to retreat into mysticism. There is irony here, for the Jews, in the century or so since their emancipation, more than any other people have contributed to the rational and the scientific achievements of mankind, and they have been the world's most poignant victims of the revolt against rationalism and science.)

There is now an enormous pull to return to the simple faith of Christianity. To an acute sense of distress is added a terrible sense of guilt as man is reminded that his own wandering from Christianity has produced the tragedies of our time. Jacques Maritain tells us that mankind has no choice except between two roads: the road to Calvary and the road to the slaughterhouse. In America, there has been a widening stream of converts to Catholicism, many of whom see in Catholicism a refuge from the anxieties of our time. There is a growing tendency to look back to the Middle Ages as a Golden Age. Some American educators are urging a return to Thomas Aquinas and Medieval Scholasticism as the core of a college education, and the Thomists are making a real bid to capture the expanding general education program in American colleges and universities. There has been a revitalizing of Protestant fundamentalism, too, although in Reinhold Niebuhr the movement back to fundamentalist Christianity is flavored with a somewhat generous dash of Social Gospel.

The retreat into mysticism has given the historical work of Arnold Toynbee an extraordinary vogue. Toynbee is vastly impressed by the literary and religious legends and myths of man's early history, and he succeeds in converting history into a delightful literary *tour de force*. He reduces the rise and fall of civilizations to poetry. The growth of civilizations can be felt in alternating strophe and antistrophe: pause and movement, Yin and Yang, challenge and response, withdrawal and return, death and birth, destruction and creation, defeat and victory, detachment and transfiguration. The decline of civilizations can be felt in a rhythmic beat: rout-rally, rout-rally, rout-rally, rout. He somewhat assures us that our own civilization may escape the destruction which threatens it, may escape the final rhythmic beats of dissolution, if it rejects the Mephistophelianism of the eighteenth century Enlightenment and returns to God, a quiet Church-of-England God "incorporating the best features of Islam, Buddhism, Confucianism, and a little, even, of the Hebrew prophets and the secular sciences."

Some of our sociologists are demanding a new religion, an avowedly man-made religion, a religion that will satisfy man's spiritual cravings, evoke powerful human responses for right social action, and square with the scientific realities of today. Sorokin has suggested the ingredients of such a religion: universality; the inclusion of all nations, races, and civilizations; the rejection of human rivalry and conflict; the ability to harmonize with an ever-developing science; applicability to practical everyday living; the capacity to change with changing needs and conditions. But will an obviously man-made religion serve the functions intended? Will such a religion, bereft of supernatural sanctions, really call forth the psychological responses desired?

And then there are the existentialists. At first blush existentialism would seem to be on the side of pragmatism, for existentialism insists that man always finds himself in a definite situation and must make specific decisions out of the concrete facts of that situation. But there is an irrational side to existentialism, too, and the individual's decisions seem to depend very largely on values that come up from the unconscious: dread and despair; the impulses to possess and be possessed; sadism and masochism; the endless struggle of each personality in a mating situation to escape destruction by itself destroying the other. And there runs in and out of existentialism a romantic and an impassioned

melancholy that emphasizes man as alien in an alien world; the utter loneliness of our being-in-the-world; the desolate sense that man is "condemned to be free"; the ecstatic experience of anguish, something dangerously akin to mystical conversion: a rending of the mind, a horror upon the heart. The vague and indefinite nature of existentialism is made plain by the fact that it can mean something radically different to different people—hence its current popularity. To Marcel it means a return to Catholicism; to Jaspers it is a source of inner salvation amid ruin; to Sartre it is a rationale for resistance and revolution.

Further enumeration of the kinds of escapism current today only adds recognition to the confusion and frustration. There are the goo-goos and uplifters, who rely on "good will" and "right thinking" to save us. There are those who believe the prospective horrors of cataclysmic warfare may frighten us into regeneration—the exhorters, like Norman Cousins, and their opposites, the reporters, like John Hersey, who rely on objective, dead-pan, sophisticated understatement of facts. There are the literary boys who feel that a "new" literature "vibrant with life, and passion, and dedication" will salvage civilization. There are the hedonists who would flee into a world of personal pleasure. There are those, like Irwin Edman, who would find refuge in a quiet and an urbane aestheticism—a brave attempt to discover and improve the lot of man, a little stoicism, a little pleasure, a little hope. And finally there are those, like Aldous Huxley, who in their own minds and persons and within less than a generation have completely rounded the arc from materialism to spiritual faith.

III

Most of our humanists have failed us. In an age which must think in terms of the peoples and cultures and experiences of the whole earth, the humanists have gone on preoccupied with only one small area of the world—the Mediterranean countries and Western Europe. More, they have neglected the modern aspects of even this area and have emphasized to the point of gross distortion some Golden Age (which in fact never existed as they romanticize it) like the Athens of Pericles or the Athens of Plato or Medieval Christendom. But since in fact most of our humanists in childhood and youth were nourished intellectually on the *belles lettres* of nineteenth century England, they tend to read into the Greek

and Roman classics and the Medieval philosophers the leisure-class, middle-class standards of nineteenth century England and to erect these into universals. More, these highly selected periods of a highly selected geographical area are treated in a highly selective way—the larger social and institutional experiences of the people are neglected for an emphasis on a few individual writers and "thinkers." More still, even the approach to these highly selected writers and thinkers is slanted in favor of those in the authoritarian, religious, and romantic tradition of the Platonic idealists and the absolutists and away from those in the rational, relative, and secular tradition of the sophists, the skeptics, the nominalists, the utilitarians, the empiricists, the positivists, the pragmatists—the tradition out of which a large part of our freedom of the individual mind and our attitudes of objective and scientific experimentation have come. Indeed, high priests of traditionalized humanism—Charles Maurras, Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, Allen Tate—take the snobbish position that literary sensibility, poetic values in themselves, come out of "transcendental values" and "the sense of grace and sin" which are supported by the mythic, the traditional, the Catholic, the regional, the aristocratic, and the agrarian, and that these sensibilities and values are destroyed by anthropology, science, industrialism, rationalism, liberalism, and equalitarianism.

Bringing to the modern world these biases against the scientific approach, humanists tend to see in science and the machine only evil (and vulgarity) rather than an enormous capacity for good. Few humanists are found counselling a patient and pragmatic approach to a solution of the problems produced by the machine; most of them are found encouraging the current impulse to escape into authority, romanticism, mysticism, or self. In plain truth, our humanists have not kept up with modern man's amazing advances in physics, chemistry, biology, psychology, anthropology. They know little of these fields and what little they know they do not like. Their humanistic experience has ill prepared them to understand the relativity of modern physics; the functional approach to modern politics; the widely flexible and largely cultural character of human nature, as suggested by modern psychology; the highly relative character of each society's value judgments, as stressed by modern anthropology. Every science, physical, biological, social—each in its own way—seems to be pointing in the direction of evolution, rela-

tivity, pragmatism. All are converging in their underlying philosophic implications. From this the humanists draw back in horror. And visualizing the historical process as deriving from the thoughts of great "thinkers" rather than from conditions and circumstances, our humanists personalize the crisis and see Darwin and Marx and Veblen and Beard and Freud and Dewey and Benedict and Einstein as evil geniuses about to destroy us. Halt this plunge into Inferno before it is too late, say the humanists. Back to Plato, back to Aquinas, back to the religious attitudes of Medieval times.

The purpose of humanism, says Maritain, is to render man more truly human. But even measured by this yardstick most humanists have failed us. Humanists tend to love man in the abstract, man as a creature made in the image of God, and not plain man as he actually is found in the concrete situations of the work-a-day world. Robert M. Hutchins, who finds the core of higher education in Medieval Christendom, confesses that without a belief in God he could never love his fellow men, that—and I quote Hutchins directly—"most cats and most dogs are more attractive than most men."[1] Indeed, our humanists tend to hold to a genteel leisure-class tradition, to the myth of the élite, which results in setting them off in interest and in sympathy from the common run of mankind.

And the scientists? Have they failed us, too? Undoubtedly the run-of-the-mill scientists, preoccupied with narrow problems in research and application, may fail to discern the underlying and cumulative implications of science for thought and life. But science has not failed. Science and the scientific method of building truth from facts in relation to concrete situations, observed phenomena, and objective experimentation are working, for good or ill, a revolutionary transformation of our world. And in order for this transformation to work human good we need not depend upon values outside of science; for science itself, science in the large and philosophic sense, has the methods which can render its work humanly and socially beneficial in a permanent way. A Conant, a Whitehead, and an Einstein are far closer to the *human* and *social* realities of today than is our leading humanist, T. S. Eliot.

And the social scientists? True, many social scientists still treat their

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[1] *Journal of Higher Education*, XVIII: 237.

disciplines as mere branches of theology, or as rationalizations of nationalism or of class or of a particular way of life. True, also, many social scientists have been unable to think across all the social science disciplines and to recognize the implications of their work for life and society. And there are still among us those social scientists who exhort us "to catch up" with the physical sciences, little realizing how far we have already come. But the social sciences have made amazing advances, advances which could do much to transform society, revolutionize man's understanding of himself, and adjust our social and political institutions to the cumulative scientific and technological changes of the last century. The social scientist does not lack the techniques, the attitudes, the knowledge, and the understanding to deal rather effectively with the social accommodations which must be made. (Granting, of course, that there is still much to be done and that there will always be much to be done.) What the social scientist does lack is popular acceptance, sufficient opportunity to apply his techniques and attitudes and knowledge in the full service of society and government.

IV

There can be no doubt about the pervasive and devastating character of the crisis through which we are passing. We are witnessing the end of an era, the end of a world, just as did the Greeks of Alexander's day, just as did the Romans of the days of the barbarian invaders and the Church Fathers.

The forces and movements, the directions and attitudes which came out of the break-up of the Medieval world have been gathering strength for several centuries, increasing in tempo with each generation, and by now they have drastically changed the whole mental outlook of man. They have made man a more rational and a more self-interested animal without wholly destroying the attitudes and values of earlier and simpler times. And what are these modern forces? Nominalism and the rise of science. The Protestant Reformation with its splintering of the Christian faith. The Commercial Revolution and the rise of capitalism, with capitalism's materialism, practicality, and emphasis on self-interest. The Enlightenment of the eighteenth century with its rationalism—that is, its critical spirit, its belief that reliance on the human intelligence, as opposed to reliance on intuition and the supernatural, can transform

environment and institutions to the physical, material, aesthetic, and spiritual benefit of men, and that the physical and material gains are apt to precede and to make possible the aesthetic and spiritual gains. (When I use the term rationalism it is in this sense, and not in the sense of a self-consistent and closed system of logic.) The Industrial Revolution with its further emphasis on materialism, standards of living, self-interest; with its tremendous stimulus to the expansion of capitalism; with its effect of infusing collectivist movements with the materialism of capitalism. The rise of the biological sciences with their emphasis on evolutionary, developmental concepts. The extraordinary growth of all the sciences during the past two centuries and the development of the pragmatic spirit as man has come increasingly to rely on related facts and actual experience, and as these have been widened and given new meaning by the scientific method. (When I use the terms pragmatism and pragmatic I am using them in this larger meaning—a growing reliance on related facts and experience and science—and not in the more systematic sense as employed by James and Dewey.)

These dynamic forces of modern history are now bearing down upon us with full and cumulative impact, and there is no escape from the cruel dilemma they have created. We are now face to face with their implications. There are those who feel that we can reject them and retreat to the simple supernatural values of the premodern period. But the rational values are now so much a part of us that we could not retreat without destroying ourselves psychologically and without destroying civilization as *we* have come to know it. Perhaps at no time since the disintegration of the Medieval world could the growth of the rationalist and the materialist spirit have been checked. Men do not go back. They go on into something else. If history, says James Harvey Robinson, is going to be as it has been in the past, it will continue to be different. Man cannot escape the modern world of science, and the attempt to escape will lead only to further impasse and frustration. Man should be concerned not with escape but with better adjustment to the world which science and the machine have produced.

At the turn of the century few thinkers in the West doubted the ultimate triumph of rationality and science, and progressives in the United States, Fabians in Britain, and Social Democrats on the Continent believed that rationality and science would transform the world in a

short time. Objective observation, fact finding, and experimentation would explore all areas of existence, and out of this enlarged actual experience would come the evolution of new, of pragmatic, of surer values. The rationalism and materialism of businessmen would be extended to all groups, and through a developing collectivism all groups would benefit more equitably from the ever-increasing production of the machine. Even the one growing irrationality in the world, romantic nationalism, would be conquered by increasing economic interdependence, the growth of collectivist movements bursting national boundaries, and the expanding of international law and the area of international contract into an international organization which, with time, would develop into a world government, a Parliament of Man. Then, most Marxists and non-Marxists agreed on the essential rationality of the world of the future; they differed only in emphasis, approach, method.

But the adjustment of social and political institutions and cultural values to the compelling facts of science and the machine proved infinitely more difficult than even the few pessimists of the turn of the century had supposed, and this became more and more glaringly apparent as the twentieth century advanced. The intransigence of declining classes; the tenacity of vested interests; the persistence of romantic nationalism; the fear of the unfamiliar in the pragmatic world struggling to be born; the resistance of the forces of irrationality, many of them dating from the remote dawn of the race—all these and more—became important factors retarding adjustments. Then, too, those essentially favoring the adjustments—pragmatists, liberals, democrats, socialists, communists—fell out among themselves, adding to the difficulties and accentuating the struggle. So fierce was the opposition, so terrible the conflict, so awful the revival of man's cruelties and barbarities, that many who had favored the new accommodations drew back in consternation. Some said, "Let us go more slowly." Some said, "Let us stop—we have gone far enough." Others said, "Let us go back to the old, even to the authority and the romanticism and the mysticism of the old, for surely we are on the wrong track; the rationalistic, the pragmatic, the scientific, and the materialistic concepts of the modern world have brutalized and dehumanized us."

Is it true that twentieth-century man's long suffering has been due to the loss of the older supernatural values, to the hardening of his nature

by a too-complete acceptance of rational values? Is not the real explanation to be found in man's history, in his nostalgia for the accustomed and the familiar, in his powerful urge to resist change? Periods of fundamental change have always been times of violence and persecution. Even in periods when man was much more genuinely and deeply religious than he is today, basic change did not take place without a resort to mass brutalities and cruelties, as strikingly evidenced by the religious wars which accompanied the Protestant Reformation. Our twentieth century is having to adjust old institutions, old codes of behavior, and old sanctions to the cumulative scientific and technological changes which began with the break-up of the Medieval world and which have been descending upon us with progressively accelerating speed since the Industrial Revolution. Our century has seen the mounting pressures of several centuries of modern history converge and demand new adjustments, adjustments which represent man's most decisive shift from his past. In the light of man's prior history, it was to have been expected that these epochal changes would be accompanied by strife and cruelty and persecution and terror. The ferocities of our time, then, can be put down not to the loss of religious faith but to the fact that man, in spite of his great advance in rational thought, is in many ways still immature, that he has not yet learned to make fundamental adaptation to fundamental change in a sensible way, that the rational processes that produce scientific and technological change have not yet been carried over sufficiently into social and political thought and action.

V

The hard experience of this century is capable of being turned into enormous benefit to mankind. For one thing, we are groping toward some kind of an effective international order. Many methods of achieving this are being tested: world conquest by one power; a division of the world into two international empires; proletarian solidarity and dictatorship on a world scale; a world organization based on contract and made progressively more vital by the increasing practice of social and economic groups within countries crossing national boundaries and cooperating with similar groups in other countries and against dissimilar groups within their own, thus applying the process of group conflict and compromise of national politics to international politics. All of these methods

are being tried out by our century; some will be discarded; some may survive to achieve a truly international state. For another thing, our century is experimenting with the extents and the limitations of class rule. We are also feeling our way toward the reconciliation of individual freedom with growing collectivism: maybe the answer will be found in the drive of an industrial society toward more and better organized economic and social groups, these groups increasingly checking one another and also checking big government.

Most important of all, we of the twentieth century are coming to realize the enormous part played by the irrational in man's thought and conduct—the importance of the unconscious; of the stream of consciousness; of fantasy and day-dreaming and wish-thinking; of the sexual impulse and its manifold and subterranean drives and frustrations; of sadism and masochism; of the urge to possess and to be possessed, to dominate and to be dominated; of dread and jealousy; of the sense of guilt and the sense of redemption; of the infatuation of collective "glory" and collective "grandeur." Even in the nineteenth century, an increasing number of Continental novelists, particularly the Russian and the French, were exploring the powerful drives of the irrational. By the turn of the century these novelists had been joined by a growing number of literary men, psychologists, anthropologists, and sociologists—Freud and Bergson are symbolic of a host of workers in many fields—in further exploration of this area. Since then their work and that of their disciples has steadily widened. Then too, the colossal mass crimes and cruelties of our century have added to our knowledge of man's irrationalities and underscored their importance. In the face of the necessity for making sweeping changes in political and social institutions in response to the sweeping changes already made in technology, man reacted with irrational and brutal conflict.

In consequence, many men, impressed by this mounting evidence of the place of the irrational in man's life, are exaggerating the importance of the irrational and claiming for it a primacy it does not have. In effect, these men are saying that the whole historical process is essentially irrational, that men are moved to important social action only by popular myths, that to defeat the great lie of a Hitler we must interpose the noble lie of a Plato.

This, it seems to me, is untenable and dangerous. Admitting the

large part played by the irrational in human society, it is none the less true that most of men's customs and institutions have grown out of real experiences. The great changes of history for the most part have been produced by actual conditions and circumstances, and not by myths. Usually, the myth comes after the changes are well upon us and serves only to give a popular, colorful, and romantic justification for them. Even Sorel, in attempting to reduce history to myth, used over and over again only a few examples (the rise of Christianity, the Protestant Reformation, the French Revolution, and the romantic nationalism of Mazzini), neglected to make a case for mythology in the overwhelming majority of great changes in human history, and even in his often-repeated examples failed sufficiently to distinguish myth-as-cause from myth-as-justification-after-the-event. (For instance, the great myth of the French Revolution, according to Sorel, was the glorious military tradition of the Revolution and Napoleon, but that myth developed *after* the Revolution was well under way and certainly did not *cause* it.) The historian of the future will come nearer the truth in explaining German fascism if he puts the emphasis on conditions in Germany rather than on Hitlerian myth-making techniques.

No, history is not the posing of myth against myth, of absolute against absolute. History is not a perpetual conflict of fanatics. When called upon to meet the challenge of the Hitlerian lie, we did not interpose a bigger lie; instead we wisely stepped up production in Pittsburgh and Detroit. And pragmatic American democracy will be more than a match for the emotional absolute of communism.

The most constructive thing that can come out of the twentieth century is our opportunity to make intelligent use of our growing knowledge of the place of the irrational. To recognize the irrational is not to embrace it, is not to glorify it. Only when we recognize the irrational—when we diagnose it, label it, isolate it—can we be on our guard against its dangerous aspects, can we prepare to take effective measures to channel those dangerous aspects. More, it is possible that much in man's irrational behavior may be eliminated because much of this irrationality (like other aspects of this thing called human nature) may itself be a cultural product and therefore subject to modification.

The problem of today is the same as it was at the turn of the century: to make a sensible adjustment in society and politics to the changes

wrought by technology and the physical sciences; to build a rational and pragmatic world with the techniques and methods of physical and social science. The way has proved unbelievably hard. But even the difficulties have produced great insights and wisdom which may help us on our way. There is no need to turn back; there is every reason to go forward in the direction charted by the thinkers of the turn of the century. In the midst of the pessimism and gloom of today we need to realize that the new road of pragmatism and science is still the probable road for modern man; we need to recover confidence in social progress and in man's ability to adjust his difficulties through human intelligence.

VI

Assuming the survival of modern civilization, there is every probability that our world of the future will continue to expand the rational methods and attitudes which have been gathering strength since the break-up of the Medieval order. Our world will become a more pragmatic world as man steadily extends the areas of study, of research, of science, and as the ordinary man learns to become a scientist in his own ordinary work-a-day situation, forever testing, verifying, and enlarging the areas of meaningful personal experience. Man will think more and more in terms of actual experience, and actual experience will be widened by scientific exploration, scientific investigation, scientific imagination. Man's intelligence, both refined and broadened by the scientific method, will enlarge experience and give it added meaning. And from concrete situations, from an ever-increasing store of facts seen in meaningful relation to situations, from verifiable personal experience, from verifiable social experience, from verifiable historical experience man will draw and develop new judgments and values. In the light of this method most of man's present-day values will be seen as relative, as differing in time and place according to conditions and circumstances. But as the world moves more and more into a common cultural stream, more and more accepting the pragmatic approach to life, and as our investigations more and more reveal to us the actual ways in which actual men operate, we may with time lessen diversities and widen commonalities. Paradoxically enough, then, the pragmatic and relative approach may yield us more true universals than the old metaphysical method ever did, but it will do this in a modest and tentative spirit and not in the spirit of dogmatic

absolutism. For truth will be thought of as always evolving, as never fixed or final.

Although man has always built his customs and institutions largely in terms of experience, the scientific or pragmatic method as a *conscious* method applied to societies and cultures is new. We are just at the threshold of its much wider application. The study of the Lynds in Middletown and the study of Kinsey in the actual sex habits of American males are suggestive of the infinite possibilities of a quantitative approach in which we learn how man actually operates and not as we with our preconceived values think he ought to operate. Increasingly man will realize how difficult it is to draw the line between the rational and the irrational in man's actual conduct, how intermixed are these processes; but also man is likely to learn that in its more extreme forms irrationality can be detected, isolated, canalized, perhaps modified and in part eliminated. And we may be surprised to find that man is not as different from some of our old concepts of him as we moderns suppose. In our pragmatic method we more and more are likely to discover that within a given culture there are norms, not absolutes; and usually we shall find the norms grounded in cultural experience and the deviations from them understandable in terms of individual experience. In short, the scientific or pragmatic method as applied to societies and cultures is not likely to be as revolutionary as we may suppose, because man throughout his history has been building his customs and institutions on experience, on an *unconscious* pragmatism.

Nor does anthropology deny the validity of some apparent universals. All men eat; but how they eat, what they eat, and what economic systems they use to produce food differ from time to time and from place to place with conditions and circumstances. In the present stage of the world it is well to remember that it is the variables that are most significant, because it is the variables, both within a given culture and between cultures, which cause the controversies, the tensions, the conflicts; *it is man's tendency to raise relative values to the level of universal absolutes that produces the human tragedies.*

Now if the generality of men come to view their values as merely developmental and cultural, as merely the product of time and place and condition and circumstance, and not as eternal and universal verities, will they believe in them with any degree of feeling, with that depth of

passion sometimes necessary to defend them from attack? What effect will the relativist concept of culture have on the conduct and activities of men in time of pressing danger? It is, I think, safe to assume that men with relativist views of culture will continue to feel pronounced preferences for the familiar and even a strong sense of dedication to established values. Men are developing enough maturity to say in effect, "I do not feel at home in the other fellow's culture because it is not my culture, and while I understand how he came to have that culture and while I do not dislike him for having it and do not wish to foist my culture upon him, still I intend to defend my own cultural values if and when they are attacked, and even to extend my cultural values among peoples who welcome them and who are ripe for them; and I take this position not because I think my cultural values are universal and eternal but because those values, under present conditions and circumstances, continue to have meaning for me and to serve me, and without them life would be uncomfortable."

For instance, most of the freedoms enumerated in the American Bill of Rights developed out of practical conditions which prevailed in Western society, particularly British and American society, during the last three hundred years. They are not universal or even inalienable, and peoples of different cultures called upon to write a bill of human rights would have difficulties in agreeing on a list of such rights, and after agreeing would put different interpretations and values upon them. These rights are evolutionary and relative, so much so that even in our own lifetime we have seen many of our American civil rights broadened, and a few of them, particularly freedom of contract, narrowed. Yet most Americans with this mature view of civil liberties feel a passionate dedication to the American Bill of Rights and would fight to the death to preserve it. (In short, a sense of dedication does not depend upon belief in an historical lie.) Men *do* develop a deep attachment to the values of their place and time in history, even though they may understand full well that these values represent an evolutionary process, that they meant something different in the past and will mean something different in the future. (But should all peoples develop this mature view of cultural differences, there would be less need to defend one's own culture, for it would not be attacked.)

Again, one may have the relative and evolutionary concept of democ-

racy—that democracy has developed in Western Europe and the United States during the past century or so largely because of economic conditions and social circumstances; that it meant something different yesterday and will mean something different tomorrow from what it means today—and still feel a strong attachment to democracy. A teacher who tells his students that democracy is largely an Idea—a universal Idea—is selling both students and democracy down the river: he is diverting attention from the social and economic tangibles, which must be kept up to date and which must be depended upon to preserve democracy, to the intangibles, which largely serve to justify democracy in popular mythology. If the tangibles ever disappear, both the reality and the myth will evaporate.

Will the machine, science, and the growing emphasis on rationality and pragmatism rob life of its beauty, its romance, its mystery? Of course not. Man cannot still his deep urges to day-dreaming, to wish-thinking, to fantasy. But increasingly people will have at their disposal wider knowledge and more effective techniques to understand themselves psychologically and to help them isolate and canalize irrationality when it appears in excessive and undesirable forms. And in their collective life, men will continue to integrate their cultural values around symbols; but increasingly they will recognize the social mystique for what it usually is—an abbreviated idealization of complicated social realities—and they will be quicker to edge the old mystique over to the limbo of superstitions as that mystique ceases to correspond with the underlying realities, quicker to recognize a new mystique based upon changing realities.

The ability to recognize and isolate the irrational is especially important if man is ever to mature, for the irrationality that gives life its zest and color and romance and quick sympathies also gives life its fear and dread and hate and persecutions. It is important that man control and channel this latter kind of irrationality in his intimate personal relations. It is also important that he control and channel this kind of irrationality in his larger social relations; perhaps more important to make a conscious effort to do so, because the irrationalities of personal relationships are within man's personal experiences and hence easier to detect and control, but the social irrationalities of group and class and religion and race and nation are largely outside his personal experience—individual men can more easily be taken in by them—and hence more diffi-

cult to detect and control. And again, it is well to remember that a portion of man's irrationality may itself be a cultural development and therefore subject not only to control but to modification and even elimination.

VII

And so in the midst of this crisis of the mid-twentieth century, in the midst of this pervasive gloom and despair, upon what can man depend? Upon himself. Upon his intelligence. Upon his cultural and historical experience, significantly enriched by the trials of this twentieth century. Upon the scientific method which progressively enlarges the areas of his experience and gives them new meanings. Man has come to know much, but there is much he has yet to learn and know. What he knows he knows only relatively and tentatively, and vast portions of what he does not know may never be known at all. He may never know the ultimate nature and meaning of life, of death, or even of this universe in which he finds himself. There is no Golden Age to which he may aspire to return. (Indeed, New York City today has more art, more literature, more philosophy, and more cumulative wisdom and creativity generally than Athens in the Age of Pericles, than Rome in the Age of Augustus, than London in the Age of Elizabeth, than Paris in the Age of Louis XIV.) And there is no Utopia to which he may look forward for the future.

But everywhere life, even for the world's most unfortunate, becomes physically and materially less difficult. There is more leisure to enjoy beauty, not only the beauty of artistic creation but the beauty which is integrated with the everyday activities of living. And people may come to have more respect and affection for each other as the areas of shared human experience are widened.

In pragmatic or scientific humanism man at last may have found the beginnings of maturity—and of wisdom.

A STORY

Fire In The Furnace

By ALAN GILLIES

He should have gone straight home from the job even if Natalie had sashayed up to Brooklyn like she said in the morning after the row about the five dollars. His hands were too stiff and cold from the wind to light a cigarette, and he shoved the pack and the crumpled red matchbook back into his side pocket.

The ocean seemed very small from between the frozen collar edges of his maroon mackinaw. The stiff cold edges were rubbing his pale cheeks raw.

He should have gone straight home, Natalie or no Natalie. The fire would go out sure, with no one there to fix it. A-ah Natalie, even if she was home she wouldn't throw any coal on. She would just as soon freeze.

All she ever did was wait around for Friday and the paycheck. *Eight pairs of shoes she had in the closet,* he had counted them. *Eight pairs,* and she had to have another. Four-ninety-nine for a pair of red shoes, like he was J. P. Morgan, instead of a forty-a-week auto-parts clerk trying to keep two kids in oats. His teeth chattered uncontrollably in the cold.

Along the highway there were hardly any lights at all. The summer concessions, cramped on the side of the road away from the ocean, their bright paint scaling, spalling off onto the bare sidewalk, were still boarded up in January . . . all except Frank's Haiti Grill, which wasn't rightly a concession, but an all-year tavern in a brick building a block down the street, on the corner.

He clenched his fists in his pockets and hoped he would last out until he got to Frank's.

He didn't go to Frank's every night, or once a week, or any special time. He had never been there by himself at all. Maybe once every two weeks or so Charlie and some of the boys from the job would go to Frank's for a short one before going home. He'd never gone by himself at all.

Alan Gillies lives in New Jersey. He is at work on a novel.

In the winter, Frank's was the only place to go in the small Jersey resort town where Charlie and Natalie lived. They lived four blocks inland in a grey four-room summer cottage in which a coal stove—Natalie called it the furnace—was set up in the living-room for winter.

There was no place else to live.

Frank's outside light, a small neon sign that was red when it was lit, hung out over the sidewalk. The sign was not yet turned on, and it was almost five-thirty. As it swayed in the wind, the sign made a grating sound that he heard even a block away. The front window of Frank's was painted over black, with an unpainted circle in the center. A light through the iced-up circle made a sick green oval on the sidewalk.

Charlie put his head as far down into the wide mackinaw collar as he could and leaned into the wind, hoping he would last out until he got to the sick green oval. He wished he had a hat. He had had his hair cut the afternoon before. The wind through the short hairs on the top of his head cut into his scalp in narrow separate scuds. He needed a hat. Natalie ought to say: Charlie, you need a hat in the bitter cold of this place.

Natalie ought to say: Charlie, you need some new shoes. Charlie, you never think of yourself, honey.

A-ah, Natalie ought to . . .

He felt his thinness—he was tall, but not meant to be thin—as the cold wind whipped his trouser legs, winding them tightly around his legs. He had lost weight. It had been a long process, but his thinness all of a sudden struck him as he leaned into the wind. He felt weak and impotent as he heaved and shuddered in the buckling wind.

If he could only last out to Frank's. . . .

He blamed Natalie for his being skinny. In the two years since they had got married she had become, from a scraggly girl, plump, with cantaloupe breasts because of having the two babies. He cursed her for his thinness with a hardly audible hissing sound, and the sound from his lips made him feel warmer for a second.

Two months after he had got out of the army he married her. Mama and his sister and they all said he was too young, twenty, to get married. He had hardly even known Natalie. He had met her at the Fair at Flemington. She said she had come with a man on a motorcycle who had got drunk, and Charlie took her home.

He could barely remember how or where they met. It was like dreaming a dream and having it strike him a week after, a dream in which the two of them, distorted and unknown to each other, spoke. But it was as if they weren't talking to each other.

I'm going to have a baby, she had said in her accusing dream voice.

A baby? he said. All right, he said. All right, we'll get married, was all he had said.

All he could really remember was himself saying *all right.*

His eyes became glossed over in the salty lacerations of the wind, and he cursed her in steaming wet words that came softly from the very edge of his lips: unformed, still incredulous, outraged.

The swing door to Frank's was sucked out a little toward him with the wind. He wiped the tears from the cold off his cheeks with the back of his hand. The door was of chrome and glass and reflected his face distortedly, with long and thin red highlights, when he pushed it open.

Charlie stood just inside the door and unbuttoned his mackinaw halfway. There was a dank stale odor on the place that was not dulled by the cold. The radiator against the brown marble-ized wall hissed, and the wind through the door-crack behind him whirred low on the same note.

Frank, behind the bar, leaning against the wall squinting as he read the *New York Daily Mirror,* had on a thick grey sweater buttoned up to his neck. He did not look up when Charlie came in, but shifted and inclined himself slightly towards the door.

A couple was sitting at a table against the wall just beyond the juke-box, towards the back of the long room. The jukebox was lit and hummed a little, the yellow front lights of it reflecting off the back of the blonde head of the girl at the table.

On the other side of the room at the far end of the bar a girl with red hair and a green cloth coat sat alone in the dim pocket of orange light that shone from above the bar mirrors. She looked at Charlie as he crossed to the bar. Vacantly she watched him as he dropped on the red leather seat of the barstool and settled himself. When he looked back at her (finally, after waiting), she turned her head quickly and looked down to the top of the bar, and Charlie too turned his head. He looked at Frank.

Frank came up slowly. He was about forty, a little shorter than

medium height, and he did not look like a bartender. His face was ash-colored and he had clean hands. His thin grey hair stood straight up like the feathers on a wet chicken, the tips of the bristly hair clots reflecting the orange lights in back of him.

"What do you say, bud?" he said. He folded the *New York Daily Mirror* in two and laid it on the counter next to Charlie's hand.

"Hello."

"What'll it be?" He had a low musical voice and Charlie could hear his breathing the couple of feet away.

Charlie thought a minute, concentrated all his thought on what he wanted. Three dollars and thirty-seven cents till Friday were in his pockets. In his pockets he had four lunches; what else?—eight bus rides till Friday. Natalie ought to say: Charlie, you don't eat enough.

The skin on his hands was shrunken up tight from the cold. He thought: something to warm me up. A shot.

"A-ah, I don't know," he said. "A brew, I guess."

Frank smiled faintly. He drew a glass of beer and set it before him. "A brew," he said in a quiet voice.

"A brew," Charlie said. He looked at the glass of beer and then laid all his change on the bar top: a quarter, two nickels, two cents. Frank took the two nickels and rang them up on the cash register that stood on the bar the other side of the fake crepe-paper palm tree running up to the ceiling next to Charlie's barstool.

Charlie kept looking at the glass of beer. Two bubbles were coupled together pure in the center on top. Then he lifted the glass quickly and drank half of it. He licked his upper lip and set the glass down, taking his hand away from it. The heavy cold taste backed up his nose.

Charlie lit a cigarette (there were now seven cigarettes left in the pack) and Frank came up again, wiping his hands on his apron.

"Cold out?" Frank said.

Charlie shook out the match.

"Radio says snow. Seems too cold for snow," Frank said. "I couldn't get no heat up all day." Charlie looked at the fake crepe-paper palm tree next to him and smiled dumbly. Someone had put cigarette ashes in one of the paper folds.

"I got her wide open, too," Frank said.

"Yeah?"

"Wide open, all day. This is since two. I didn't open till two." Frank's lips were pale from the chill on the place, almost purple.

"I thought," Charlie said, "I thought you were open in the morning." His voice was flat, as if he weren't thinking of what he was saying. He lifted the glass in front of him in embarrassment and finished drinking the beer.

Frank picked up the glass right away when Charlie set it down, and went to refill it.

"What's the use?" Frank said, when he set it in front of him again.

Charlie's stomach gurgled emptily. He looked at the new glass and pushed the quarter forward across the bar. He should have gone home. If she wasn't there, what difference would it make? What difference would it make to her if she was cozy with the kids up to Brooklyn? And if that fire went out. . . . He imagined himself opening the door to the cold dark crowded living-room of his house, that always smelled of ashtrays.

"I mean what's the use if nobody comes in," Frank was saying.

Why didn't Frank shut up and read his paper?

"What's the use of opening at all if nobody comes in?" Frank said.

"I don't know," Charlie said.

"I don't make enough to keep this place open in the winter," Frank said, hardly moving his lips at all. He looked around, frowning.

Charlie scowled at him. "Why do you?"

"Oh," Frank said, "If I don't stay up here in Jersey I go down to Florida like the rest of them, and lose my whole roll from the summer." He sighed hesitantly. "Then I got to borrow to open up the next . . ."

"Oh."

"So you don't get ahead neither way."

"No, you don't get ahead."

A sudden short burst of laughter came from the couple and Charlie turned to look at them. The man at the table looked back at Charlie blankly.

Immediately Charlie turned again and drank the whole glass of beer.

"But I got a boy down in Florida," Frank said.

Charlie did not hear him, but, wiping his mouth with his hand, looked down the bar at the girl in the green cloth coat. Her shoulders sagged and she was preoccupied with looking at the bar top.

"Waiting for her boyfriend," Frank said confidentially.

Charlie slumped and scratched his chin, wondering idly how long she had waited, how long she would wait, what her boyfriend did for a living.

"I got a boy in Florida," Frank said. "He's a baby specialist in Jax. That's short for Jacksonville."

He turned and looked coldly at Frank. Frank's eyes were blue, weak and vacant-looking in the dim orange light.

"Give me another beer, will you?"

Frank, let down, said, "Sure, of course . . . yes, sir." Frank picked up the glass and the quarter and retreated noiselessly to the right.

Charlie's pulse quickened slowly and his hands began to tremble a little with their new warmth. He crushed his cigarette savagely into the side of the bar, the hot sparks showering onto his hand. He jumped and nursed the hand.

To the side, he could see Frank slowly drawing the beer, and his eyes smarted with the slowness, with the embarrassment that he was sitting there with now three dollars and seven cents (four lunches, eight bus rides, no cigarettes till Friday), with the outrage of his just sitting there trying to loosen up on a half a buck, with just sitting there, not a good thump left in him, *all right, all right, all ri— . . .*

The cash register jangled and wheezed loudly and he looked up. His right hand only burned a little, but he kept the other cupped over it in his lap. Frank set the beer in front of him. The nickel Frank rolled on the counter vibrated and settled next to the glass in a puddle.

"My boy's a doctor in Jacksonville," Frank said. "I ain't been down there in six years. He's got his friends. . . . He's a big man in Jax."

Why the hell didn't Frank go down and shoot the bull with the redhead?

Charlie reached up over the bar for the glass. With a jerk, with the side of his hand, he knocked it over. The beer shot over the back of the bar onto Frank's apron. The edge of the glass rattled brittlely a second on the bar top.

Frank looked down at the liquid dripping now slowly over the side of the bar, and then at Charlie. He let it drip a moment before reaching for the bar towel. Charlie looked at the glass, trying to figure out what happened. He thought, the beer must be dripping on Frank's shoes.

The other people in the room, the girl with the red hair and the green cloth coat, the couple at the table, gazed at them with interest.

Charlie stood up and looked behind the bar at Frank's beer-drenched apron. "Jeez, I'm sorry!" he said in an amazed voice. "I'm sorry. I gave you a bath!"

Frank laughed politely. "Don't let it worry you." He laughed again.

"Jeez, I'm sorry. I must be blind."

"Happens every day. I'll get you another," Frank said, brushing the front of his apron.

"I'm an ox!"

"Happens *ev*ery day," Frank said, picking up the glass, wiping the bar. He was smiling a little as he walked over to the tap.

The hum of the jukebox seemed very loud all of a sudden, and the wind through the door-crack changed to a lower register. Charlie sat down again, wishing he was out of there. As he waited for Frank to come back with a refill, his stomach felt like a rock.

Frank was slow. Charlie drew out a dollar and laid it on the bar.

"No, we'll forget about that one," Frank said.

Charlie picked up the bill and held it out insistently. "I spilt it," he said. He wondered if the redhead was still looking at him.

"It don't make no difference."

"No, I spilt it myself."

Frank shrugged and took the dollar. He rang up the sale, and in a moment threw some change in front of Charlie.

He stood facing Charlie expectantly.

The broken cigarette ashes blew about in the deep brown crepe-paper fold of the fake palm tree. Charlie had to force himself to lift his hand from his lap to the glass on the bar. He didn't want the beer at all now.

"What happened to all the guys that used to come in with you?" Frank said. He leaned on the bar.

Was the girl still looking at him? The impulse to get up and get out drained out of him slowly. It was too cold on the street. It would be cold in the house if Natalie did go up to Brooklyn. . . .

"You used to come in with four or five guys," Frank was saying.

"Yes, they're still around," Charlie said. "They had to go home."

"Yeah? You work with them?"

"Yeah."

"They ain't been in for a long time," Frank said.

"No, they've been busy, I guess."

Frank stared at the jukebox, frowned, and went to a switch behind him on the wall, turning off the lights and the hum of the idle machine. He came back and leaned on the bar.

They were both surprised when the girl in the green cloth coat said, "Mister." Her voice was high, but not loud. Frank looked at her and she smiled thinly at him.

Frank eased himself up and walked slowly down to the girl. Charlie watched them idly. The girl wanted another drink. She wanted something else. Frank was talking with her in low tones.

Charlie watched them with interest, drinking slowly at the glass of beer. In the orange light, the girl's red hair was luminescent.

Frank mixed the drink for the girl, who laid a couple of bills on the bar. He said something and the girl nodded.

Frank carried the bottle back down the bar to Charlie.

"She wants to buy you a drink," Frank said.

"Me? She wants to buy *me* a drink?"

"Yes. She says you look cold."

"Cold?" Charlie eyed the bottle in Frank's hand. It was good bourbon. He looked down the bar at the girl. She smiled thinly, the tips of her teeth wet and glistening, nodded.

"Yeah, cold," Frank said. "I said I didn't know if you wanted her to buy you a drink."

"Well, where's her boyfriend?"

"There ain't no boyfriend. She drove up in a new Chrysler. I usually kick them out, but there was nobody else in the place, so I figured, what the hell."

"What the hell," Charlie said slowly.

The noise of the wind through the door-crack had stopped, leaving the hissing of the radiator and the slow undulatory conversation of the couple at the table.

"The drink is up to you," Frank said. "If you want a friend, I won't say nothing." His face was expressionless.

In the long bar mirror the steam from the radiator against the far wall was reflected, foaming onto the gloom in ever-changing wisps, fading right out of the picture. He looked down the bar at the girl who

was staring urgently in his direction. He turned away quickly, the picture of her urgent pretty face printed before him in the dimness. They all wanted something. Natalie wanted a pair of red shoes, the girl with the red hair wanted love, the boss wanted eight steady hours for his lousy eight bucks a day, Frank wanted a pat on the head. Everybody wanted something. *Goddamn me, I just can't get started.* Charlie rubbed his loins deeply. If Natalie *was* home she would raise hell if he didn't show up. *I just can't get started.* If Natalie was home there would be hell to pay. If Natalie and the kids. . . . And that Goddamn fire. . . . The steam, reflected in the mirror, seemed to be formed and dissipated in mid-air.

A deep wrinkle formed between Charlie's eyebrows. "It's . . . my wife's expecting me for supper." Natalie better have left a can of soup or something.

"I'll just say, no," Frank said.

"Just say no," Charlie said.

Frank put the bottle under the counter and walked down to the girl at the other end of the bar. He leaned over the bar and talked to her discreetly.

The girl turned quickly for a moment and looked at Charlie in surprise. Then she turned to Frank, gathered her cigarettes, a silver lighter and a pair of black gloves and put them into her black purse. She got down off the barstool, saying, "I certainly didn't mean it *that* way."

The couple turned to look at her.

"I didn't say nothing. I only said he didn't care for it," Frank said in a calm audible voice.

The girl buttoned her coat rapidly, walked a few paces from the bar and turned.

"You made that implication," she said.

Frank shrugged. "I didn't say nothing, lady."

The girl turned again and walked quickly towards the door, with her arms gathered about her body to hold her purse. "I'm a married woman," she said.

Frank shrugged his shoulders. The swing door opened and shut four times, setting a new chill on the place. At the table the man and woman began to laugh.

Frank came slowly down the bar towards him, and Charlie gulped the last of the beer, as if he had to finish it before Frank arrived.

"What am I supposed to do with them?" Frank said with a laugh.

Charlie said, "I don't know."

Frank shrugged his shoulders and laughed quietly. He looked at Charlie's glass, smiling.

"Refill?"

Charlie dropped his palms on the bar with a slap, standing up. He gathered his change slowly.

"No," he drawled. "I think I'll go home where it's warm."

Frank smiled tensely, rubbing his hands together. "I don't blame you, bud. I don't blame you at all. I couldn't get no heat up all day."

Charlie buttoned his mackinaw all the way up. He half-nodded and said, "Well, good night."

As Charlie turned, he saw the two people looking at him from the table. The woman was laughing. She was quite drunk, and said in a shrill, thick voice: "Don't go, mister, the party's just beginning. Please don't go, we'll be all alone in this big, big place!" The heavy bald man with her laughed hard and slapped his thighs.

Walking across to the door, Charlie hesitated, made a wide desultory gesture with his hand at the woman and smiled limply.

He pushed the door open and went out.

Frank was wrong. It wasn't too cold for snow. The wind had died completely. Snow, in large loose flakes, was falling heavily and straight down in a silent sudden void. He pulled the mackinaw collar up.

Across the highway, beyond the boardwalk, the sea was surging soft in another void, the sound muted by the bridge of snow. He stood a moment, adjusting himself to the silence, afraid to move for the sound of his own footsteps.

Then turning, he scuffed his shoes on the still bare sidewalk. Snow never kept in that place. It melted on the touch of the salt-crusted shore.

He rounded the corner and went west on Knoedler Street.

Parked diagonally in the street, so the windshield was facing the sidewalk, was a new blue Chrysler sedan. Peering out through the snow, her forehead pressed against the windshield making a halo effect of steam on the glass, was the redhead. She saw him, and for a moment, as he passed by, through the veil of snow, they stared at each other without embarrassment, vacantly.

A moment later, when he had gone on, he could not remember that he had seen her.

He realized suddenly that the snow, falling before him now heavier, never really touched the earth. It came out of the endless inverted funnel of black sky, was illuminated a moment by a street light, and melted quickly, beyond remembrance, on the thin salt crust of the shore. All that was ever left were some wet patches.

He scuffed his feet on the sidewalk, making a gritty sound. Slackening his pace, turning his face upward into the soft cold sting of the snow, he worried about the fire. It was too much to expect that it would be all right and burning when he got to it.

Singers of Provence

By DAVID IGNATOW

Was it beauty for one's head
to be hoisted upon a petard,
or to be run through with the sword,
or to be strung up by the wrists
for some slight against your king,
singers of Provence? You made music
to cover your guilt, you were all scared;
and you sang to bring on the ecstasy of lies;
while we with the door wide open
on the scene of the crime face the day
clearly with these words: we were here
and we witnessed it, the deaths and drownings,
the deeds too dark for words;
they would rumble in the belly meaninglessly,
but we speak our minds and the song sticks.
The people sing it, the singer believes it.
The air springs with a new song.

DAVID IGNATOW's *Poems* has been recently issued. He lives in New York.

Freedom: A Look at Fundamentals

By RUBIN GOTESKY

NO IDEA IS MORE IMPORTANT TODAY than "freedom." Around it the issues of this age, in blood and property, are drawn; yet, tragically enough, there is little agreement as to what it means, even though there seems to be general agreement among many that it has great intrinsic advantages. What one man calls "freedom," another calls "tyranny"; so that the issue today seems to be not what word to use, but rather what things, relations, or processes are meant when the word is used.

Yet if this were all, the act of pointing or designating might suffice for all differences. Unfortunately, this will not suffice, for the word "freedom" is related to and often identified with other words like "democracy," "liberty," "civil rights," "duties," "general will," the "people," "sovereign will," and "economic security." With so many words apparently referring to so many different things, it is hard to discern their exact connection with "freedom." And what multiplies difficulty is the role of self-interest which makes men consider this or that principle which is of advantage to them, a "freedom." This way of thinking is not limited to those who oppose "freedom." Tragically, it extends to those who are most genuinely concerned with furthering it.

The problem can be stated succinctly enough. It is not a question of saying that "freedom" is this and this only. It is a practical problem of defining "freedom" in such a way that it is in accord with the best human traditions and practices, and yet also serves as a methodological instrument for sharply distinguishing it from what its enemies call "freedom." In the cold battle of ideas, we need such distinctions against even our closest friends who often applaud and accept ideas most serviceable to our enemies both within and without.

The above must serve to explain the example which needs now to be made of Professor Ascoli's *The Power of Freedom*.[1] It is not he who is

[1] Max Ascoli, *The Power of Freedom*. Farrar, Straus, 1949. $2.75.

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here criticized; he is known as a friend of and tireless worker for "freedom." It is his ideas which play into the destructive hands of a totalitarian enemy who grows more powerful every day. This enemy has weapons enough—in our greed, our divisions, our sightlessness. It is folly to hand him additional weapons in confused ideas which he can use to win over the troubled and distraught among us.

And now, what is "freedom"? Its root, Professor Ascoli declares, is in work. Precisely what he means by this is not clear, but he goes on to explain that freedom is a product or a fruit of work. He adds that it "is a mode of labor that allows the worker to recover the energy he has spent. It is net income from work well done." But that is not all. "Freedom is power, a concentrated, skillful capacity to act." Also, "the circumstances of men's labor condition the freedom they derive from it; and the test of freedom is the degree of control men are able to exert on these circumstances." We should now have a clear understanding of the meaning of freedom. It is "fruit," "net income," "power," "degree of control."

How shall we interpret these words? How are they related to work? There is little doubt that freedom is, *in some sense,* the product of human labor or work. But in what sense? There are three senses in which the word "work" is customarily used. One is the expenditure of energy for the attainment of some purpose. In this sense, there are many people who expend energy but who do not work, for example, coupon-clippers, debutantes, and the unemployed. A second meaning is the expenditure of energy in a form considered socially useful and for which one is paid. In this sense, too, there are many people who either perform no work at all and are paid—our coupon-clippers, again, for example, or those who engage in such enterprises as smuggling or peddling dope for which they are paid, though not usually considered socially useful. The third meaning is the system of production by which men supply their many and varied wants. But while every system of production requires that a certain number of people (sometimes all) must work in order to produce the goods that keep it going, it is not true of the major systems of production that all men need to work. In fact, the major systems of production so far have been so organized that those who do the least amount of work often get the most.

If we use the word "work" to mean a "system of production," we are in a better position to understand its relation to freedom, but we still

face ambiguities. Should the expression, "system of production," be taken to mean the economic institutions which produce our bread, our cyclotrons, and our cigarettes? In this sense, "system of production" is obviously inadequate. In fact it could not operate. Every relatively complicated system of production requires political, educational, legal, and even religious institutions to keep it going. Thus "system of production" must mean something wider than the economic and must include all kinds of institutions not ordinarily called "economic."

To Professor Ascoli, such difficulties with the meaning of "work" do not exist. Work is work; and it produces "freedom" as one of its fruits. What "fruits"? His first definition tells us that freedom is "net income from work well done." Now if we understand work as meaning the system of production, then this apothegm is immediately false. We have seen that the people who often enjoy the highest net income are the very ones who do the least amount of work, "well done or otherwise." And similarly, if "freedom is power, a concentrated skillful capacity to act," then it is further evident that work is not its source. The statement, "the circumstances of men's labor condition the freedom they derive from it; and the test of freedom is the degree of control men are able to exert on these circumstances," is closer to the truth, but still equivocal. Does this mean—some men? Men as a group? Each man? Under what circumstances? And why is this the "test of freedom"? Why is this not "freedom" itself?

Every system of production places the individual in a complex of relations to other individuals and institutions; it defines the possible avenues of making a living, finding a career, and getting married. Thus every system of production determines what this or that man, in this or that position, can and can not do; in other words, it determines what freedoms he can enjoy and where his freedom stops. However, to say this, profoundly true though it is, is not yet to obtain any idea of the meaning of "freedom." We still do not know how to distinguish "freedom" from what is not "freedom." To do this, we need to recognize that every system of production establishes between men a system or chain of claims, recognized by law and custom, which usually go by the name of "rights."

Methodologically speaking, rights are distinguishable into three kinds: *freedoms, compulsions,* and *restraints. Freedoms* allow men two or more alternative forms of action within a given area of action. Thus

freedom can be as narrow as the plebiscitary vote in which a man can say only "yes" or "no"; or as wide as the United States in that he can live wherever he geographically chooses. *Compulsions* allow no man any choice. These are things which he must do, whether he wants to or not. He must go to school up to a certain age, or he must serve in the Army under compulsory military training, or he must submit to vaccination. Lastly, *restraints* tell a man what he can not do. He can not deprive another man of his liberty without due process, or force him into servitude or sell himself into slavery. Compulsions and restraints are often the conditions of the freedoms, but they are *never* identifiable with freedoms.

With the help of these distinctions, one can always determine whether a right is *really* a freedom or not. And with their help, one can sensibly accept many compulsions and restraints as necessary and socially valuable without falling into the totalitarian error of calling them freedoms.

Many liberal thinkers including Professor Ascoli are always making the tragic mistake of identifying socially valuable rights which are either compulsions or restraints with freedoms. Professor Ascoli, for example, seems to think every right a freedom simply because a freedom is *often* a right. But if this were true, then a "free" society could not be distinguished from a "tyranny," since the rights in each would be, by definition, freedoms.

Professor Ascoli not only identifies freedoms with rights, but goes further: he asserts that rights *as such* make a man free. "Rights bring the immediate experience of freedom within the reach of each living man so that he too may have a chance to make the best of himself." Such a statement plays right into the hands of his pet enemies, the Soviet Communists and Fascists. They identify rights with freedoms and affirm that their rights *are* freedoms just because they allegedly give every man the chance to make the best of himself. That making the best of himself is determined for him from the moment of birth to death means nothing to them. The important fact is he is making the best of himself; and this makes him free.

The failure to make these basic distinctions also leads Professor Ascoli to say that

> freedom of speech, of education, of religion, does not mean that each of these particular activities is thrown open for promiscuous unregulated use. Rather, it means that it is available to everybody willing to subject himself to the dis-

> cipline that the particular activity demands and that makes of it a carrier of freedom.

It seems obvious that that which makes a freedom of "freedom of speech" is not that which makes "freedom of education" a freedom. Freedom of education in the sense of *free* schools for all, is not a freedom at all but a compulsion—at least, in a country like the United States. Here all the children up to a certain age *must* go to school. Professor Ascoli's added remarks concerning freedom of religion further reveal his lack of understanding of these distinctions. He says:

> The right to profess a religion, which is called freedom of religion, does not mean a cynical indifference to religion or unrestrained license granted to any religious cult. Religious freedom is a mode, a type, of religious experience. The very belief implies a religion, a religion to which all faiths minister. . . . When religious freedom turns into religious indifference, then new cults are likely to come into existence carrying all the earmarks of bigotry, and religion becomes again, as in its savage origin, a discipline of segregation.

It is one thing to limit freedom of religion to toleration. But it is another to say, as Professor Ascoli does, that religious freedom means *just this;* and to distinguish it from "religious indifference." Freedom involves choice of action. One can insist, for good and sufficient reason, that these choices ought to be limited in this or that respect, but in so limiting them, one ought to recognize that the freedom of choice is being limited and restraints imposed.

The failure to understand the significance of these distinctions is clearly illustrated in a right which Professor Ascoli considers *the* fundamental right and the greatest freedom of all: *the right to work*. Now the right to work is important, and may be as important as he makes out. Unfortunately, Professor Ascoli confuses it with another right or rights which he describes as follows:

> In our times the right to work has acquired an urgency above all other rights and appears as the foundation of them all. For it is not just *the right to have a job, but to conditions of labor and compensation of labor that do not bar the enjoyment of other rights.*

Professor Ascoli thus identifies the right to work with the right to a job, to adequate wages, and to satisfactory conditions of work. Certainly these are wonderful considerations but, agreeable though they are, they are not identical with the right to work, as traditionally understood, nor are they "freedoms." Such rights can just as well be guaranteed to slaves. In fact, they exemplify the Soviet conception of a "freedom," which in-

cludes having a job, good wages, and satisfactory conditions of work. But the Soviet citizen who is guaranteed these conditions—in theory, at least—is not in consequence free. He does not legislate them; they are legislated for him; and he must accept them whether he wants to or not.

The right to work traditionally has meant something different. It is a right or freedom which the NAM has long defended. Certainly, says the NAM, every man has a right to work—if he wants to. However, the NAM argues, this freedom to work is not the same as the right to a job. The latter means that a job must be provided; and it means, if it is to be effective, that a man must take the job provided. The compulsion upon society to provide each man with a job is inseparable from the compulsion of a man to work at it.[2] This last argument is identically the argument of the Soviets. Rightly enough, the NAM argues that to guarantee a job to every man is to destroy the fundamental freedom—the right to work. They also argue—again rightly—that the right to work can remain a freedom only as long as the decision to work, or *not* to work, remains with each man.

The essential point is that Professor Ascoli is not proposing a new freedom but a number of new compulsions. At the same time he is asking that the "right to work" as a fundamental freedom be rejected. Many people agree with him and believe that the right to a job, adequate wages, and satisfactory conditions of work is a new freedom. Unfortunately this is not only to confuse a freedom with a compulsion, but to smooth the path of totalitarianism and state serfdom—which are the more serious dangers. One may think it better to be a slave lapped in luxury than a free economic man starving, but it is essential to understand that one is substituting luxurious slavery for impoverished economic freedom.

Professor Ascoli is here not merely discussing rights or freedoms. He is discussing those rights or freedoms which are *fundamental* to society. He is not discussing rights, for example, which belong to a physician or a senator by virtue of the fact that one has a medical degree and the other a seat in the United States Senate. *He is referring only to those rights which are common to all men no matter who or what they are.*

Among such rights or freedoms he defends one which he considers

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[2] See Barbara Wooton's excellent discussion of this question in her book *Planning for Freedom.*

so fundamental that he describes it as "absolute" and "universal." This is the *right to earn rights:*

> Whenever the attempt is made to segregate any group of human beings because of race or of class or of religion and to put beyond their reach the basic skills that make men, then we can always know with absolute certainty that we are facing a most vicious form of evil—an evil that we must uncompromisingly fight. For it is as murderous to deprive men of the capacity to reach their own measure of humanity as it is to massacre them.
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> The right to earn rights is a life-making right when respected, life-breaking when violated. It is the one and only right that is absolutely universal and binding for all men. Whoever violates it is an outlaw, a criminal against mankind, for this is the one and only article of universal legislation from which all our laws depend and which no law can proscribe.

The sentiment expressed is noble, but nobility of sentiment is not our sole concern here; we are concerned with the incisiveness of what is said.

What does the right to earn rights mean? Plainly it means that there are different levels of rights; that all men can not enjoy the rights belonging to these different levels because they have not earned them. Furthermore, it is impossible for all men to enjoy them because they may never have the skills or capacity to earn them. Now if Professor Ascoli is opposed to the segregation of any group, to the deprivation of any man of the chance to reach his own measure of humanity, how can he support a principle which does exactly that—which segregates human beings into classes with more or less rights and deprives many human beings of rights simply because they lack some natural capacity?

Moreover to defend such a principle as absolute and universal is manifestly absurd. First, it is not universal. Until I read Professor Ascoli's work, I must admit I had never heard this principle enunciated anywhere. I doubt if any society—tyrannical or free—has ever accepted such a principle. Secondly, it is not absolute, if "absolute" means something which is true without any limitation whatever. For as Professor Ascoli himself observes, rights are historical: "The rights of men are different as the heritages from the past and the conditions of life and labor are different."

Thirdly, it is inapplicable. In any system of production, fundamental rights are granted to men independent of their earning them and necessarily so, for only by granting rights in this fashion can any society main-

tain itself. Children are taken care of by their parents, but who would say that children earn this right? Some parents would bitterly say of their children that they never earned anything.

Lastly, Professor Ascoli is actually not discussing, as he thinks, a freedom, but a restraint. Properly formulated, it does not give any man a right to choose between a given number of alternatives, to decide what he wants to do within certain defined or implied limits: it denies to any man the right to act in such a way as to deny another membership, for example, in the AMA because of his color, or from living or vacationing in a place because of his race or religion.

II

Most of the confusions so far discussed are rooted in the unjustified assumption that all rights which can accomplish given social objectives or goals are freedoms and those which can not, are not. Professor Ascoli does not discuss the right to private property. He mentions it only in passing as essential to a peaceful world society. But it is an excellent illustration of the use of the above unjustified assumption by critics unfavorable to it. Noting that the right to private property, under modern conditions, leads to the exclusion of a majority of the population from enjoying this right, they justly condemn it. But they do not condemn it as the wrong kind of freedom, a freedom having bad social consequences. They condemn it as a restraint or a compulsion. And when they propose as a remedy that no individual or group be allowed this right, they describe their proposal, ironically enough, not as the restraint which it is, but as a new freedom.

It is high time to recognize that a freedom is not necessarily socially good and that it may be better to reject it than that men should suffer any evil effects from it.

Professor Ascoli is not one of those who argue that "freedom," as he conceives it, is a good-in-itself. It is a good because it is the best means available to achieve certain social goals which he thinks good-in-themselves. A very grave responsibility thus falls upon him. It is his duty to state as clearly as possible what are these social goals which seem so imperiously demanded by present historical conditions and to show the importance of freedom for their attainment. Such social goals can not be left implicit or mentioned casually whenever the discursive need arises. Once stated, they may be immediately agreed to by all sober, intelligent,

goodwilled men; but there is always the possibility that not all of these goals will be agreed to or understood in the same way. Also, it does not follow that freedom will be the best means of attaining them; analysis may show that compulsion or restraint is preferable. Finally, to discover whether certain freedoms are really relevant for given social goals requires methods of testing and tests.

Professor Ascoli never makes explicit his social goals except in passing. With a few exceptions, he fails to specify the freedoms he thinks are essential and to relate them to specific goals. We have already seen that he confuses rights which are either compulsions or restraints with freedoms. He fails to prove that such freedoms are more likely to achieve their social objectives than any others. Lastly he fails to indicate the techniques that should be used in testing them.

To return to the all-important social goals, among those Professor Ascoli scatters through his book, the following seem most important to him and to others:

a. Providing every man with a decent standard of living.
b. Providing every man with the opportunity to develop his gifts and talents in such ways as will be most useful to himself and his fellowmen.
c. Preserving religion.
d. Establishing peace internationally on a permanent basis.

These goals can be summarized in four words: security, opportunity, piety, and peace.

Now what has freedom, in general, to do with these goals? As stated, no one can know. For freedom can not exist, as John Dewey has pointed out, independent of controls, i.e., independent of compulsions and restraints. The only practical plan is to specify freedoms which are thought to be means to the attainment of these specific goals. By doing this, one often implicitly indicates the specific controls which are required to make these freedoms effective.

What freedom, then, does Professor Ascoli propose as essential? For security, he proposes the right to work and the right to earn rights. Both he thinks are freedoms, but our previous analysis has shown that neither is a freedom. For opportunity, he proposes again the right to earn rights. But this, too, was shown not to be a freedom but a restraint. For piety, he proposes religious toleration under the name of religious freedom. He denies that anyone should have the right to be an agnostic, an indifferentist,

or an atheist. While in this instance he proposes a freedom, he has seriously limited the range of religious choices.

For peace, he proposes the strengthening of the United Nations; and as he says:

> In our times, there are four major prerequisites of international political order. The first is active international competition for the control of agencies that administer the pre-political international functions. The second is the existence of independent governments capable of doing what is in their power to do and differing from each other in type and range of power. The third is the existence of private property. . . . The fourth is the availability of substitutes for property in the form of social security and assistance, in order that the citizen may enjoy a measure of independence from the fluctuations of his economy.

Are any freedoms mentioned above which will make for a durable peace through the United Nations? Only one is definitely stated, the right to private property and another possibly implied, political freedom, in "active international competition" (among governments, I suppose) for control of pre-political agencies. Exactly what sort of political freedom is involved here we are given no idea.

About political freedom Professor Ascoli has a great deal to say elsewhere, but never seems to speak of it as directly related to any one of the specific goals mentioned above. He speaks of it in the most general terms, praising it as something essential for the best utilization of the available resources of men. This is high praise, but it tells us little as to what political freedom is in the concrete. Political freedom is, in fact, not something that can be discussed as such, but stands for what the mathematician would call a "collection" or "set" of freedoms like the franchise or the right of political association and formation. It is these which should be properly discussed, rather than political freedom.[3]

The above freedoms in the proper sense of the word "freedom" are the only ones Professor Ascoli mentions as fundamentally significant.

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[3] The other two "things" in the quotation are certainly not relevant to the problem of freedom. It is obvious that a state, free or not, has to have authority. And the last idea is certainly trivial. How can any state prevent its citizens from having some sort of life of their own, from making their own experience and testing its worth? No matter how totalitarian a state is—this is one factor that can not be legislated out of existence so long as the individual remains alive. And it has nothing to do with political freedom as such, except as one may argue that individual experience can not be fully exploited for the benefit of society except through political freedom.

What arguments does he advance to show that these freedoms are essential? The unfortunate fact is that he never seems to think that concrete freedoms have to be justified. Nor does he see that justifying a freedom involves distinguishing between the freedom and the conditions for its exercise. Thus he writes of men who are guaranteed a job, adequate wages, and satisfactory conditions of work as being free, when in fact, these are conditions of freedom *where freedom exists,* but not otherwise. Economic freedom in the form of the right to work only exists when men have the right to decide for themselves whether they want to work and at what and for what wages and under what conditions.

III

Moreover, justification of a freedom involves examining into the conditions of its effectiveness or possibility. For example, one may argue convincingly that every citizen should be given the right to vote and the right of political association because citizens with such rights will more willingly obey the law and are less likely to rebel against the state. There still remains the practical question of the conditions under which such freedoms should be exercised. Should the citizen have only one vote or as many as he wants? Should he be given the vote only if he satisfies property and educational qualifications? Should he be permitted to belong to any political party he pleases or be limited to only those parties which have certain qualifications, for example, not being a member of some international association of parties? The last question, in particular, has become in recent times of profound importance because of the extraordinary success of the parties of the Communist International dominated by the Soviet Union.

To justify a freedom, therefore, involves an investigation into conditions of its existence. What questions are important for evaluating existing freedoms? The following would seem particularly important.

(a) Under what conditions does the freedom operate?

(b) Are these conditions necessary for maximum effectiveness or should they be removed?

(c) If the conditions ought to be changed in some respect or altogether, can this be done?

Let us examine two freedoms—the right to work, and the right to private property—by these criteria. For many of us, the right to work, as

traditionally interpreted, is of paramount importance. It is right that an individual should have the choice of working or not; and if he wants to work, to decide for himself at what he wants to work, at what wages, and under what conditions. It is also right that an individual ought not to be compelled to work in case he finds that others will not meet the conditions he lays down. But are we justified in asserting this freedom?

Under present conditions, the vast majority of men have little or no control over job conditions or wages. What kind of job is open to them is conditioned generally by birth, economic status, and education. Moreover, economically speaking, as an individual working man, one has little or no bargaining basis against his employer. He has to accept whatever job is offered or starve. Furthermore, with the appearance of unions, whatever little choice previously existed, is even more restricted, for the worker now delegates the function of bargaining to the union; and such decisions as the union accepts, he must accept.

Obviously then, modern conditions seriously curtail the effectiveness of this freedom, since it leaves modern man with only one alternative, as a usual thing: to take what he is offered, or starve. The only ones who can really enjoy this freedom are those who are so well provided for that they can wait for the kind of work they want or even make the sort of work they want.

If the right to work is to be made effective, then, changes ought to be introduced to alter the conditions under which it is exercised. One idea might be to provide every man with an income adequate for his needs so that he could afford to wait for the right job. In addition everyone might be given the kind of education which would give him the background needed for the job he wants.

Can such conditions be introduced? The answer must be, so far as experience goes, "No." No society has been able directly to support individuals in this fashion. In most modern societies, individuals who do not want to work unless they get exactly what they are looking for, are usually supported by their families or by begging. As for education, even where free schooling exists up to the college level, it is necessary to restrict the number of individuals who might want it. Moreover, even if both ideas could actually be put into effect, the number of jobs available in a given category, especially preferred jobs, is strictly limited. To take an extreme example, the job of President of the United States is limited

to one man; and the possibility of any man getting it is around 1 in some 30,000,000. In any case, there will be men who can not get the job they want. Should society be burdened with the business of supporting people who do not want to work except at that which they want to work? Would this not lead ultimately to the breakdown and collapse of society?

Considerations like these might lead one unwillingly to limit severely the right to work, or one might go so far as to insist that it is not to the best interest of the individual or society to allow such freedom. Every man should be provided with a job at which he must work whether he wants to or not. Every man must earn his keep.

We turn now to examine into the conditions under which the right to private property exists. Professor Ascoli insists that it is an essential condition for world peace. Certainly in the face of an international attack on this freedom, it needs rather strenuous defense. Moreover as private property in its present mode is often accused of being the primary cause of war, it certainly requires more than Professor Ascoli's simple assertion to make one believe that it is one of the four essential conditions for world peace. Would an analysis of the conditions under which this right exists be able to justify such a conviction?

It is generally admitted that the modern economic world—not to speak of other societies—has tended to create two broad classes, one much more numerous than the other. Those who own no property compose the much larger class in numbers; those who have property are markedly fewer. Now the property which is the battleground of this difference is the kind which is often called means of production or productive property. Productive property (as L. T. Hobhouse and Marx agreed) gives men —and a small number of men—power over the propertyless.

Now is this state of affairs essential? Do we need this freedom so much that the evil consequences which flow from it must be accepted and partially remedied by such forms of assistance as social insurance? Or can something be done so that all men or the vast majority of men can enjoy this enviable freedom? The universal answer today is that modern technology is such that private ownership is necessarily limited to a few. The few—and they, in almost all cases, must be organized into corporations—are the only ones who have sufficient capital or property to acquire ownership or part ownership in these vast productive enterprises. The rest must remain economic tools of these productive enterprises. Since

society is inevitably geared to mass and mechanized production, the argument runs, one must accept the right to private property as limited to the few or forego all the benefits which follow from it. An alternative to this is that ownership should be made a corporative right of every individual, or, in other words, society should take over all productive property.

There is still a third alternative. It is pointed out that all productive property is not built on this vast scale. There are still many forms of production which are on a small scale or small enough to allow for competition and wide diversification of ownership. Thus it is suggested that property on a monopoly or semi-monopoly scale should be owned or controlled by the state. Other types of property should continue to function under the aegis of private property. However, it is recognized, even under this third alternative, that the freedom to own property will still be limited to a relatively small proportion of the population.

Now which of these alternatives can one select? All of them are actually possible, for they exist today. The answer to this question, however, is extremely difficult. Much more ample consideration would have to be given to the question of the actual effects of each of these systems, but the preference seems to be in the more highly industrialized countries for the third alternative.

The one question which has not been answered is the relation of private property to peace. Certainly if the arguments advanced above mean anything, then private property in its present form seems to be one of the causes of war. A second cause is the conflict which exists over property rights between the East and the West. How freedom to own property therefore can possibly be a condition of peace in the present world situation is beyond understanding.

The examples used above ought to prove one thing: that the analysis of the conditions of a freedom is essential for determining whether that freedom can or can not achieve the purpose it is supposed to serve.

In examining into the conditions of the right to private property, we found ourselves unable to choose between alternatives. The reason is that we had no way of determining in advance which of them is best. Often enough those who argue in favor of freedom and even mention specific freedoms fail to provide procedures or tests to determine the value of their freedoms. They seem to think it sufficient to make clear that their inten-

tions are of the highest and that they have a theory or a program—which they point out is more than other people have. Unfortunately such criteria —if we may honor them with the name—are hardly sufficient when the issues confronting us are death, war, and starvation.

One obvious distinction which is often forgotten is that goals are not the same as results. A goal is an end-in-view, something which is desired but does not as yet exist. A result is an actuality; it is what is obtained as a result of using certain means. Unfortunately because one has a "wonderful" goal in mind, it does not follow that the result will be that goal. Only actual, not intended, consequences are the test of both means and goals. Thus it is essential to state all goals in such a way that one can determine by the results whether the goal has been achieved or not.

Goals refer to a process, something that keeps going all the time. Means and goals are part of and processes within this process. When one sets means going, they take us places and they involve stages of operation. If one can indicate, or if one tries to indicate beforehand, what stages are supposed to occur, then what occurs can serve as guideposts and tests of the adequacy both of our means and goals. Thus, John Stuart Mill, having decided in his last years that private property was inadequate to serve the social welfare, concluded that state ownership of the large productive enterprises is the only answer. Nevertheless, he recognized, not only that he might be wrong, but also the risks involved in a sudden change-over from private to state ownership. Such a sudden change might produce greater evils than already exist. Therefore he proposed a technique for acquiring adequate knowledge and sufficient experience for managing huge enterprises on a state scale. He suggested that the government set up at appropriate places large pilot plants. Here the necessary knowledge and experience could be gained in terms of which an entire industry or all industries could be ultimately run as state enterprises.

A similar technique for experimentation in the law was suggested by Stanley Jevons. He pointed out that laws are passed to apply over the nation without regard to the appropriateness of such legislation or to the question of determining whether the effects intended occurred. This, in general, is pernicious enough, but it is even more pernicious in those cases where law is being made to deal with something about which there exists little or no knowledge and experience. He proposed, therefore, that legislation, particularly in the latter cases, should be limited to areas

where it seems to apply. Time limits should also be set. Also he recommended that scientific commissions be specially created to study the effects of the law in order to determine whether the law should be continued and whether it could be extended over a wider area. In this way, bad legislation would be limited in its bad effects and the good of good legislation maximized.

We, in this country, have exceptional opportunities to apply and add to such techniques. We are divided into states and a federal government; and each still exercises a considerable amount of administrative independence. For example, the experiment with FEPC was such a great success in New York that it was copied in other states. Unfortunately while we have excellent opportunity to try on a small scale all kinds of ideas, we are by and large unwilling to go about consciously doing so. One reason, among many, is that too many of our social thinkers have spent much of their time boasting of the virtues of freedom rather than doing the infinitely harder thing—developing concrete experimental procedures and tests for the very things they boast so much about. A more productive activity might be to urge the governments in Washington, London, and Paris to try a *few* experiments on a *small* scale.

Doctor-Patient Relationship

By DOROTHY DULLES BOURNE

THE SUBJECT OF HEALTH is prominent in public thinking today because of the apparent failure of our present system. The failure, however, appears to be social rather than individual; little is said of the actual relation of the patient to the doctor, to the nurse, and to the often archaic attitudes and routines which so vitally affect the individual. While, on the surface, these relationships and attitudes have little to do with improving the public health, they are nevertheless closely connected with such an improvement if we believe that the essence of democracy lies in the maximum development of its individual constituents. Everyone is touched by illness and the anxieties connected with it. The effects of this intense personal experience are primarily psychological, but with the growing understanding of the inter-relationships of psychology with sociology, economics, and politics, the reactions reach far into the life of the body politic.

The problem, broadly viewed, includes innumerable questions of attitudes and procedures in clinics, hospitals, doctor's offices; in the new demands in some areas, contrasted with too docile acceptance in others, on the part of the public. But the keystone for both the community and the individual is the doctor. He has the highly specialized knowledge which has given into his hands the responsibilities of life and death, whether we are looking at a single patient or at the death rate of a community.

The relationship of doctor to patient is, therefore, not only pertinent but essential to any complete consideration of the problem of health in our society. The pattern of this relationship is one which is largely set by the doctor. The patient has subordinated his part in a situation in which he is deeply involved, but where his lack of knowledge and his need for help have inevitably placed the burden of responsibility on the doctor. It is, therefore, in a sense, presumptuous for a layman to attempt to express

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a view which is still unorthodox and often inconvenient. Nevertheless, I believe that in recent years new elements have been introduced which, while they complicate, may also in the long run enrich this difficult human relationship.

Today our popular magazines are full of information, some good and some bad, on the most dreaded diseases and the most spectacular drugs. Modern psychology (usually Freudian) has seeped through, often dangerously, to the average man, and its terminology is becoming part of our common language. Glib discussion of psychosomatic medicine has provided many people with an explanation of elements of the "whole man" which had previously existed unlabeled. Everyone had a psyche and a soma which somehow had to live together, but often in an uneasy truce which no doctor was able to make into a true peace. Then, as now, many so-called normal persons went through life with less than their full vigor; others became invalids, suffering from undiagnosed ills which now can at least be labeled "functional"; another group broke down mentally when the maladjustment went deep into the personality. Now the individual in our society is making new demands—demands for a fuller understanding of himself and a new ability te relate himself to the rapidly moving world with fuller knowledge and use of his potentialities. His little knowledge may be a dangerous thing, but, in association with illness as in other fields, it emphasizes the need for a better integration of the self with its world.

If either the person or his environment were static, this process of integration could be outlined in a generally accepted form. We could have neat categories of types, of situations and of reactions. But the facts that both factors move separately and together, and that each immediately alters and affects the other, makes this a problem of ultimate difficulty. That this is an old question and has been dealt with through the ages does not absolve us from an attempt to find an answer, or, at least, to look for the direction which our present and growing knowledge indicates.

For the doctor in relation to his patient the difficulty of this process of integration takes its most extreme form. The self regarding the self is one of the perennial problems of psychology and philosophy, but the doctor must deal with the further complication of the sick self. He finds the patient's image of himself often distorted by fear—the final fear of death, the lesser fears of invalidism, or pain, often accompanied by fears

for other persons involved, or darkened by economic worries. These fears can seldom be isolated because fear itself has physiological effects which, superimposed on illness, cause further disturbance and deflection from the normal. To these (subjective) obstacles to the objective view of sickness on the part of the patient must be added the impossibility for the doctor of giving him enough physiological, medical, and psychological background to form the basis for full understanding of disease. To all this must be added the long history and tradition of the medical profession from the time when it was magic, and per se incomprehensible, to the present, when the complexity of increased knowledge seems to offer an equally strong block to the layman's participation.

The doctor is faced with a dilemma: whether to attempt to work out with the patient the almost impossible problem of integration through reason, or to fall back on the traditional role of his profession which is in effect the authoritarian attitude. "If you cannot understand, have faith." When the latter solution is accepted, obedience, rather than cooperation based on understanding, must be the part of the patient.

The type of person who gladly gives up his captaincy and lets the doctor take over is, from many standpoints, the good patient. He relaxes, asks few explanations, gives himself up to a situation beyond his control. The opposite type of patient is the rebel—to him the sick self is a new uncomfortable aspect of the whole self. Somehow, as a person, he must reconcile this strange and difficult experience with his character, as he has learned to live with it. This may involve changes in both his character and philosophy. His approach to life, and his training, has been scientific, inductive, questioning, nonauthoritarian. His world has been one of relationships and of faith in the dynamics of a situation, not acceptance of its static qualities. He is as different from the "good" patient as the child who must learn to tie his own shoe when it would be so much easier to let his mother do it.

This patient meets, head on, the traditional attitude of the doctor. At the same time he recognizes the limitations of his own knowledge; he realizes that the doctor cannot supply him with a medical education and that, without it, he cannot have the full understanding which his philosophy and training would like. He feels that the fears, inherent in the situation, are driven underground, rather than met in the open. They rise in unrecognized forms, distorted by the lens of ill-health, to make

more difficult a solution which he somehow must work out if he is to achieve any internal satisfaction in this new phase of life.

Is there any solution either for the patient or for the doctor? The doctor finds himself caught between his recognition that, by not satisfying intellectual curiosity, he may be creating or augmenting the psychosomatic problem, and his belief, reinforced by the limited time he can give to any individual, that his patient can never know enough to make a cooperative venture satisfactory. But the answer is that, in spite of all apparent obstacles, the relationship of doctor and patient is essentially mutual. However imperfect, the actual solution lies in the degree and method of practical cooperation.

The doctor always must depend to some extent on the patient's description of symptoms, no matter how inaccurate or inadequate. "Does that hurt?" is a familiar question. The patient, on the other hand, even in the simplest situations, turns to the doctor. "I put on an icepack before you came; I hope that was the right thing to do." From this point on the ways of the two types of patient separate. The obedient type gladly yields to the authority of the doctor; the questioning type turns to the doctor as the expert, as the one who can supply him with the raw material and help him in working out his own personal problem. He need not ask for highly technical information, but he must have some fundamental explanation (subject naturally to the limits of medical knowledge today) of cause and effect on which his own reason can operate.[1] He cannot change the mental habits which have become part of his innermost life; he cannot turn off, though he may be able to redirect, the drives which are inherent in his personality. It is in a sense paradoxical that the demands of this type of person are greater than those of the person who willingly relinquishes his responsibility to the doctor.

It is not fair, however, to oversimplify the division between types nor to assume that there is no common ground between them. All patients know the comfort of reliance on a doctor's decision, of faith in his skill and competence. When it comes to the much discussed matter of whether or not the doctor should tell the "truth" to a patient when that truth may involve facing death or adjusting to a new way of life, type

[1]If any genuine neurosis were involved, the role of the doctor would be different. This article can deal only with patients who can act without transference of responsibility.

reactions are not necessarily predictable. The person who has worked out an elaborate, thoughtful way of life may be more violently affected by its sudden change, and hence less able to adapt himself, than the person who has always accepted external events without much need to see them in relation to himself; or, a change in the whole order of the individual's external life may stimulate valuable new developments in the more demanding type, while it numbs the other into a suffering acceptance. On the other hand, the usually passive person may be roused to a more aggressive attitude by a doctor's assumption that the patient's role is acceptance of what the doctor thinks is good for him. Perhaps the doctor can tell, and perhaps he is right in measuring the amount of "truth" in accordance with his estimate of the patient's capacity to accept it.

But surely there is also a risk in such decisions, for the maximum value for both types of patients depends on their trust in the doctor—a faith in the sincerity of the relationship. If this faith is destroyed there is a loss and it is possible that there is greater over-all waste of capacity among those who dare not accept the doctor's assurance for fear it is not the truth, than there is a saving of suffering for those who are spared knowing bitter facts. This is pure speculation on the part of the layman, but one sometimes wonders whether doctors realize how widespread is the doubt of their word and whether they fully estimate the damaging effects of this doubt. (It is of course hardest on those doctors who are most truthful and who suffer from the patient's assumption that they are not telling the truth.)

It does seem highly questionable whether a doctor should apply a different standard of truth to his patients from the one which regulates other parts of his professional life. Doctors claim that when they themselves are ill they accept the role of patient. But there is bound to be a difference, for they have the basic knowledge to which they can relate what they are told. In their own minds they can accept or reject it. If they choose to accept it, that is a deliberate act of the will based on their own knowledge and experience.

Illness can never be regarded as an isolated experience. However it is dealt with psychologically, it becomes part of the individual's total experience. The fact that it may be largely an emotional experience does not make it any the less real. The emotional awareness of self can be as true as the cognative awareness of others and of the external world. And

the final truth for the individual lies in their integration. The ratios between the two vary in different experiences and in different personalities, but the combination—conscious or unconscious—is inescapable. The doctor, with his knowledge of the psychological and physical factors, is in a position to help the patient sort out these factors—to explain where the deviations from the normal lie, to be the interpreter as well as the healer. He should, in doing this, recognize that the norm itself varies.

Psychologists together with sociologists, social workers, and others who deal with human relations, have been too prone to define the well-adjusted person as the one who can adapt himself to the status quo. There are many people who cannot accept, either emotionally or intellectually, any standard which is static. To them, anything other than a changing world is a substandard world. These people are bound to reflect in their individual lives some of the stresses and strains of the external world. For them the definition of normal must include potentialities, not merely what already exists. Here the doctor, as interpreter, can make the present psychosomatic emphasis not merely diagnostic, but dynamic. The increased understanding of the inter-relation of mind and body certainly has positive as well as negative aspects, is a force for increased health in our society, has values beyond those of pathology.

The doctor is often loath to broaden his sphere to include areas beyond the conventional doctor-patient relationship. This is easily understandable in view of the complexity and the delicacy of that relationship. But if he looks at illness as a part of the total experience of the patient and that total experience as one piece of our social structure, is he not compelled to make his own knowledge available, through the adjustment of the patient, to the society of which both are parts? Must not the patient and his family be prepared to see his disease as it really is in order to take their share of community responsibility for the general health? The process, including some of its difficulties, is similar in many ways to that of the social worker, the politician, the scientist. It requires new techniques and new uses of language to make intelligible to the layman those parts of specialized bodies of knowledge which he needs if he is to live with peace of mind in the world of today. The atomic scientists set an example when they felt a compulsion to come out of the laboratory into the field of politics and public opinion to inform the layman on those phases of atomic science which would affect the individual and so-

ciety. The subject matter was at least as difficult as either medicine or psychology and was similarly complicated by the effects of fear in a form which became personal through novelty and horror. There are signs that social psychology, sociology, anthropology, and politics are all breaking new paths between the layman and the expert as well as finding areas of common ground among themselves. Medicine stands in a strategic position between the exact sciences and the social sciences.

The relation of the doctor to his patient has become more than a problem of physical and mental health. It is a problem of democracy, a proving ground for our faith in the development of the individual and our belief in science; a further faith in a dynamic relationship between each person and his changing world, material and spiritual. The whole self, which contains the elements of creation, growth, and decay, must find its own unity and a way of living wtih the very things which often discomfit the conscious self. Many who, "out of weakness were made strong," will testify that this can be done. The doctor who accepts his difficult role, as interpreter as well as healer, will find his reward wherever a patient is able to accept suffering as only part of himself, a part which must be integrated with the whole, and himself as an essential part of dynamic society.

A Great Dilettante

By ALFRED POLGAR

> Only naïve persons can believe that the release of intra-atomic energy would mean the solution of the social question. Due to the activation of the atom, the top-dogs only would get more greedy, the under-dogs poorer, and the wars more bestial. To solve the social questions we shall need moral fission.

THIS SOBER FOOTNOTE to an intoxicating theme can be found in *A Cultural History of Modern Times,* written almost a quarter of a century ago by one of Max Reinhardt's actors, Egon Friedell, Ph.D. The opus, three spacious volumes, was published in the late '20's by Munich's respectable publishing firm Beck, the American translation by Alfred A. Knopf in 1930-32 (reprinted in 1933). The reviewers here and abroad sounded off in perfect disharmony, but objection no less than recognition was expressed in superlatives.

"The three volumes have no rival in keenness, frank unconventionality, philosophical sweep, and stylistic brilliance," said the New York *Times.* "With all these virtues . . . a rotten book. A great idea in a state of dismemberment and decay," ruled the *New Republic.* "Challenging the opinions of the generally recognized authorities," remarked the *Christian Science Monitor.* The *Yale Review* made both the weakness and the force of the *Cultural History* show up in the twilight of this statement: "It will bring to the untutored reader far more reality than the authoritative text in which every fact is true and the whole account false."

Thus the judgments on Friedell's book, so far as they are known to me, seem to agree after all: a brilliant miss, rich in convincing absurdities and hard-hitting antinomies, this is the delightfully scandalizing work of an expert dilettante whose shortcomings are as considered as the intellectual revenue he draws from them. It has the provocative extraordinariness that, encountered in an individual, stigmatizes him as a personality.

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For this reason it will catch today's reader, too, in its net artfully woven of narrative and meditation, of facts and ideas; and it will delight him with the glitter of its apropos epigrams, similes, and metaphors. Even the critical opposition noted the book's "mean cleverness" and recommended it as a medicine against fatty degeneration of the mind. It has remained thoroughly alive in spite of its more than twenty years—a venerable age for a book in an epoch that makes years jump ahead of decades. Normally, a work on history enjoys, at such an age, permanent retirement on dusty top shelves (provided it is not suspected of classicism).

Before his *Cultural History* appeared, Egon Friedell, Ph.D., was unknown to the scholastic world though a popular figure in Vienna's night clubs. A drinker, hell-raiser, and merrymaker of Falstaffian format, he worked in the city's cabarets as comedian, raconteur, improvisator, "flash poet," but he always insisted that a Ph.D. follow his name on the playbills, *pour épater le bourgeois*. Such puckish gestures, his genius for epitomizing in a few words the ridiculous in the mental makeup of his fellowmen, his noisy presence, his alcoholic way of life, and the multitude of anecdotes whose hero he was, assured him in Vienna the rank and standing of a "character." The Viennese have always had a weakness for "characters," and their city has given birth to them in great numbers, in many variations, and in various fields—from music to sweets. Vienna withdrew her sympathy only when originality threatened to deteriorate into genius.

While preparing his *Cultural History,* Friedell moved to the legitimate stage. He was the unique case of an actor, an impersonator of men who could impersonate no one but himself. Yet this, in most cases, made his stage figures only more juicy and more full of life than they would have been in their unviolated identity. Friedell, Ph.D., remained behind all masks the one and only Friedell, Ph.D., in body and spirit. His ego, unmistakably determined by very personal features and oddities, stepped out of every role. He stood always above or outside the stage situation in which he was supposed to dwell. But Friedell's "mean cleverness" knew how to mix his histrionic shortcomings into a core of synthetic talent. He turned his inability to disguise himself into the virtue of naturalness; and his lack of craftsmanship he made to look like enchanting lightness of acting. In a review of his Tubal in *The Merchant of Venice* I once wrote: "Mr. Friedell played most credibly an actor who

plays Tubal." (The constitution of our friendship, originating in earliest youth, granted freedom of malice.)

Friedell's relation to the theatre exemplifies what secures for this good European a niche in the history of his times. He stepped on the stage because the loose contact of an onlooker did not satisfy his love for the theatre; and he felt urged to perform, not so much because of a special talent for the thing as because of a special passion for it. This, it seems to me, defines a civilized human type that has become most rare—the dilettante (the term used in its original noble sense).

As an actor, an *homme de lettres,* a historian, Friedell was a dilettante in the grand manner. His was a dilettante's genuine and voracious appetite for the totality of knowledge. He was at home (almost) in all landscapes of the mind, intimately familiar with arts and sciences as if each of them had been his specialty. He confessed to being a dilettante with the same zestfully provocative frankness with which he denounced himself as a plagiarist and as a man of the most inconsistent opinions on one and the same subject. In the preface to his *Cultural History* he defends his claim to the title of dilettante with acute arguments (a claim of his, by the way, which has never been disputed by the professionals): "Only the dilettante—also amateur or lover—has a truly human relation to his objects. . . . The expert knows too many details to be still capable of seeing the thing sufficiently simple, and for this reason he lacks the first condition of thinking fruitfully." Explicitly he insists on the dilettante's privilege "to talk about interrelations incompletely known, to report facts inaccurately observed, and to picture events never reliably recorded."

Imagination was to him the most dependable guide to truth. To follow this guide, no leap was too audacious for his playful and adventurous intellect. Friedell was already in his forties when he fell in love with the humanities. The affair became steady, was querulous and happy, but never reached the sheltered haven of marriage. And each of the fifteen hundred pages of the *Cultural History* betrays the offspring's gay illegitimacy.

The book gives a biography of Europe's civilization from the Black Plague to the first World War, but the life and work of its author continue the tale. For Friedell's personality faithfully reflected his Europe during the pause between the two wars.

It was a Europe suspended in mid-air between resignation and revolt, between cynicism and mysticism, between attempts to recover the lost safe ground and desperate attempts to interpret the loss as a gain. Friedell's spacious mind gave hospitality to all these tendencies, but at the same time he was also looking for order. The inconsistencies of his personality seemed most accurately balanced against each other and he never lost his equilibrium. He had an immeasurable joy of living; and the fear of life, which he had too, was resolved by his remarkably developed talent to find life comical. A contemporary against his will, he escaped from the disquieting present into the comfortingly settled past, from the deplorably real world into that of the theatre (which he considered to be "the well-nigh magical in our existence"). Many of Europe's literary figures, more sensitive in matters atmospheric than her statesmen and politicians, smelled the "wind of darkness" which, according to meteorological fables, precedes the great quakes. Friedell did not notice anything; or rather, he did not want to. He retained his balance—to his personal misfortune. Allergic to anything that might have disturbed his work, or rather the comfort he needed for it, he kept jealously out of contemporary events. As a historian he knew that history is not made by higher intelligences but, to the contrary, by statesmen and politicians. A religious man, he also believed that superhuman powers determine the course of the world. A philosopher and an artist of life, he stood above given situations in reality just as on the stage.

Europe, in Friedell's days, was still suffering from the consequences of the last catastrophe and was already hit by symptoms of the approaching one. These menacing symptoms had begun to accumulate particularly in both the big and the small ventricles of Europe's heart—Germany and Austria. But the old patient showed ghastly vitality, ran a productive fever, and his deliriums were full of good, even brilliant ideas. With the colors of decay, literature and the arts painted interesting ornaments as yet unsurpassed in their audacity. Even in Vienna, dried out by the dust storms of misery, intellectual life moved restlessly on, culminating in two such glaring figures as Karl Kraus, the most pertinent German satirist of his century, and the great dilettante, Egon Friedell. Karl Kraus revenged his cruelly offended ideals in a frontal attack on reality. Friedell paid no attention to reality. He rather took a walk into the past to put bygone things in order or, at least, to rearrange them in a disorder which

looked more plausible. From such expeditions into fully explored territory he brought back a rich booty of original insights and surprising allusions; and a new "philosophy of what had happened." Gourmet that he was, he followed Faust's advice: "Feast on that which has gone long ago." Delight formed the style of Friedell's work. It gives his *Cultural History* the incomparable luster that has not yet faded.

II

Egon Friedell was a big, corpulent man, slow and heavy, with a voice and gestures that filled any room he entered. The bright eyes below the heavily modeled brow shone with intriguing enjoyment of, and all-around love for, men and things. His spites were candied with good nature. He manufactured them for the fun of it, never in order to hurt. Except for alcohol, he lived modestly and economically. In his last years —presumably because it did not fit with his established way of life—he took to elegance and wore a monocle on a gusty ribbon. His profile was Goethe-esque. This physiognomic accident was handy when he played the title role in the dramatic episode *Goethe* by Friedell and Polgar. (In this playlet the prince of poets, moved by pity, takes a badly prepared student's place during an examination about Goethe. Of course he flunks miserably, showing himself particularly ill-informed on the scholarly data of his own biography. Friedell and I contributed this and many similar products of collaboration to the euphoria of mortally sick Vienna.)

Friedell was a figure of the Victorian Baroque transplanted into the twentieth century, a philosopher and a clown, which fitted quite well with his own theory that "the philosopher begins where man stops to take himself and his life seriously." Accordingly, he held no brief for Berlin, where people never ceased to take themselves very seriously indeed. In the court of a house in Berlin, he once saw a pile of huge boughs; no twigs, no bark—the naked picture of usefulness. "That, I presume, is what these people make trees from," said Friedell. He had a perfectly Viennese heart (containing genuine as well as fool's gold) and a perfectly un-Viennese mental constitution. This made him immune to the atmosphere of the seductive city where talent likes to evaporate into emptiness and where the borders between work and play so slovenly disintegrate. Friedell, on his part, drew these borders very strictly. He lived a painstakingly disorderly life, clearly divided into excess and abstinence, into

mad and meditative periods, into days of indulgence and days when he measured on a pharmacist's scale the calories he allowed himself. His physical life followed the dialectical scheme of thesis and antithesis, but never reached the synthesis—moderation.

He was the peculiar phenomenon of a Bohemian nostalgic for the security of home and peace, a work-fanatic permeated by a "pious belief in the sacredness of doing nothing." It seems still a miracle how a human brain, even one of Friedell's capacity, could ever accumulate the educational material which his *Cultural History* displays so lavishly. One is inclined to assume that he did not necessarily study all those sciences and arts, all that literature, fiction and nonfiction, and all the literature about literature—this whole universe of information from which he drew ravishing colors for his work. More likely, the magnificent dilettante he was might have done like the dowser, who does not plow the grounds bit by bit but digs only in places where the vibration in his hands indicates that he has found what he seeks.

Fate had it that Egon Friedell was destroyed by his very civic virtues —his pedantic sense of order, his diligence, his dependence on habit. A few days before Austria disappeared in the German gorge, Friedell announced to friends his intention to commit suicide. He refused any thought of flight (for which he might have found easy opportunities). He seemed panically confused—not by physical fear, but because he was afraid of a radical disturbance of his routine. He could not bear the thought that he might have to part with his old-fashioned room, with his books, so endlessly marked on the margins. He could not face the probability that his files, tens of thousands of excerpts, would be hopelessly messed up. Not the menacing dissolution of his society, but the prospective disruption of his carefully planned timetable shocked him into self-destruction. On March 14, 1938, at night, when he saw SS men enter his house, he jumped through the window, dressed in his blue lounging robe. Another version has it that SS men shot him in his room and threw him on the street. A relative of his who identified the corpse in the morgue thinks he noticed a bullet wound in the neck; but the woman who kept his house said it was suicide.

He died a few weeks after his sixtieth birthday. To those who had remembered the occasion, he had mailed identical cards which said in cold print: "Of all congratulations received on my sixtieth anniversary,

yours has pleased me most." He had remained a bachelor. In his ways with women he had the extremely unembarrassed tenderness of a bear, but he did not think much of woman's soul.

Friedell was a Jew, but his appearance did not necessarily show it. So it happened that the theatre critic of Vienna's anti-Semitic *Reichspost* was somewhat amazed when Friedell was cast as a Jewish lawyer in the play *Criminals* by Ferdinand Bruckner. "What's all this, Doktor—you are playing a Jew?" "My dear friend," said Friedell, "an actor must know how to do almost anything." Friedell owned a summer cottage in Kufstein, in the Tyrol, right on the Bavarian border. Once, in the early spring of the Hitler regime, he took a walk into Bavaria and there he saw, across a cozy village road, a white banner with the crudely painted words, "Jews Not Welcome." This expression of a negative desire, displayed just like the "Welcome!" banner at a county fair, struck him as incredibly funny. The grotesque aspect pleased him more than the evil scared him.

His humor was an offshoot of an affair a dissatisfied, skeptical brain had had with a perpetually content temperament. And his humor acted as a balance in the clockwork of his soul: when, in March, 1938, he lost it for the first and last time in his life, he himself was lost. Until then he seemed to be a man completely in agreement with the world, whose evil he thought was more than compensated for by its foolishness. To this foolishness he contributed his decent share. He was a humorist by appointment of the Lord, equipped for it with every talent needed (among other things, with an inherited monthly income).

In the theatre he was the darling and the horror of his colleagues. His phlegm and his slowness made him look provocatively out of place amidst all the nervous theatre business. On opening nights, just a few minutes before his cue, Friedell used to retreat to the one room that gives privacy even backstage, to contemplate some more the deeper meaning of his role, as befits a Ph.D. The staccato of the fists of co-actors, as they desperately drummed at the door of his retreat, warned him he was about to miss his cue. (He never did.) He was not exactly popular with Reinhardt's playwrights. "How do you like my play?" one of them once asked him. "Magnificent," said Friedell, "though it has stretches of length." "It still has?" queried the exasperated author. "I have already cut half

of it, as is." "Well," said Friedell, "in such a case half measures are of little use."

The *enfant terrible* in him was on perfect terms with Friedell the conscientious scholar; and the mutual understanding is manifest on many a page of *Cultural History*. In his nest, built of books, manuscripts, and comfortably familiar furniture, Friedell, wrapped in the most grandfatherly dressing gown I have ever seen, looked like an alchemist in his den. Whenever he thought the brew he had just mixed was good, he would lie down on the faded couch and sing. This was a signal for Hermine, the housekeeper, to come in, and Friedell would read to her the latest few pages. He called this the "moron test." He used to smoke enormous, intricately wound pipes of legendary college days, drink red wine in gargantuan quantities, and in the intervals of his daily routine he wrote a profound play in five acts, *The Judas Tragedy*. He loved dogs, preferring unpedigreed, screwy ones. Schnick, an ugly midget of a Pomeranian (whom he had adopted in a dog asylum because nobody wanted to keep the pathetic creature), was educated strictly toward the standards of his master. "Bring me the newspaper." The dog did. "Do you know what's in there?" The dog shook his head. "A miserable review of your master." Whereupon Schnick furiously tore the paper to shreds. A popular diversion in the summer season was for Friedell to swim on his back far into the lake, carrying the little creature on his towering belly. From time to time Friedell spouted a mouthful of water vertically into the air to give Schnick the illusion he was traveling on a whale. When his droll comrade died, Friedell wrote this exhaustive eulogy: "Whoever knew him will comprehend my grief."

Schnick's successor was called Schnack.

III

So it is understandable that people who knew this Friedell were greatly surprised when they learned what this mad bird had hatched in complete secrecy—a voluminous, learned book which gave the lie to the angry remark of the old Goethe that "the Germans possess the particular gift of making science inaccessible." The science Friedell served in his *Cultural History of Modern Times* tastes of first-rate entertainment. And this taste was not achieved by simplifying and adulterating the ingredients (as "popularized" science usually does) but by a cooking process which

unlocked the matter, extracted indigestible particles, and applied generous seasonings.

Educated Viennese found it difficult to tolerate the offense their most prolific jokester had committed by deserting into the land of scholastics. But they forgave him when it was discovered that there was a lot of genuine Friedellisms in the *Cultural History;* that Friedell's humor showed through the solid text as the watermark shows through good paper. For this very reason the book aroused the anger of the craft; they considered it disqualified by its very quality—namely, by its ability to present science in such a way that it seemed to have lost its whiskers of dignified boredom. By the same token, the *Cultural History* evoked the delight of educated laymen. True, this book negated information and insights they had appreciated as established; forced their eyes to adjust themselves to uncommon perspectives; made them use the elasticity of their brains for dangerous mental leaps. But all this was done painlessly—the spirit and the wit of the author acted as a dependable anaesthesia.

Six centuries of man's history are unrolled in Friedell's work as an impressionistic painting in words—words of a magnificent writer. Resistance against some of his doctrines and interpretations is disarmed by the grace and *esprit* of the performance. What he says of the English satirists of the early eighteenth century goes for himself: "They open some valve in their brains and immediately a gay cloud of paradoxes, malicious jabs and bon mots escapes." Friedell did not share the German conviction that water, to be believed deep, has to be opaque. His language, now cuttingly sharp and then again poetic, is of Latin precision, admits air and light, has elasticity.

The *Cultural History* sparkles with formulations of deadly elegance. For Leopardi, the Italian poet and hater of the universe, Friedell wrote this fine epitaph: "He rejected the world in verse so beautiful that it converted man to the world." The discussion of Emerson begins with this bit of malice: "He appeared at a time when America was already in danger of getting Americanized"; and ends with the tender phrase: "He stood still, listened to his heart and took notes."

In the Austro-Prussian war of 1866, an obscure Austrian General Krismanek, was the opposite number of General Moltke. "It was highly improbable that a man by the name of Moltke could be licked by a man

named Krismanek," remarks Friedell in whose historical circus the clown has his place.

The Eiffel Tower, to Friedell, is significant of the mediocre art appreciation of its time. "For which reason it is so suitable as a model for knickknacks: it is inconceivable that the Cheops pyramid could be copied for pincushions."

In the Renaissance, "drunk with earthiness," he liked among other things "the grace, the good breeding, the perfect manners—one might almost say, the tact—with which people killed one another." In the Reformation he saw "the victory of the science of faith over faith itself, the victory of theology over religion." Periwig and face powder, the exterior features of the rococo, Friedell interprets like this: "Rococo felt old and longed desperately to hold on to youth. So it erased age differences with the periwig, and made the powder crust on faces a universal uniform. The white head with the painted face was the tragic mask of the time." The epoch of enlightenment gets this specification: "The gardens of science, during the Renaissance fenced by the barbed wire of Latin scholarship, are now opened for general use." The career of coffee, "the character drink of the late Baroque," Friedell (himself an addict) explains with the "power of coffee to produce sober intoxication." For the mental disease of Nietzsche he gave this diagnosis: "He suffers from megalomania: he thinks he is Nietzsche." He calls Andersen "a poet so profound that children could understand him." And this occurs to him as a characterization of Hamlet's mentality: "Though he still believes in ghosts, he has, on the other hand, already read his Montaigne." Friedell's formula for the British bourgeois: "On Sundays, the Bible is his ledger; on weekdays, the ledger his Bible." (Even so, an unabridged German edition of the *Cultural History* was published in London in 1940, the most desperate year of Britain's war against Germany.)

In this book, logic and imagination cooperate and agree. Refreshing air blows venerable dust from historical objects, and sometimes it removes the objects with the dust. The reading gives threefold pleasure: a spiritual joy due to the penetrating and wholly unconventional intelligence at work; an aesthetic joy due to the linguistic brilliance of the presentation; and the great pleasure of self-conceit due to the manifold objections which the author so generously plays into the reader's hands, leaving him with the illusion of being just as clever as Egon Friedell, Ph.D.

He makes use, with virtuosity, of the dialectician's black magic that unifies the ununifiable. Positively and negatively charged evidence is equalized through the lightning of the paradox. For, in Friedell's opinion, the path of the truth seeker leads him inescapably into the realm of paradoxes: every thought, when thought through to the end, results in its opposite. Friedell is a master of the technique of knotting contradictory beginnings and ends into one single dictum. The forte of his *Cultural History* is to evoke opposition in the reader, to keep him in cerebral tension. It provokes him with the radicalism of its judgments; with an appetite for reopening the trail on events and figures on whom definitive historical sentence seems to have been passed; and with the use of "exaggeration as an essential tool."

In addition to proudly claimed dilettantism, exaggeration, and paradoxes, Friedell insists on his right to say again what others have said before. Goethe had put it this way: "Everything pertinent has been thought before—one has merely to try to think it once more." Friedell finds a tougher formulation: "The whole intellectual history of mankind is a history of theft. . . . All world literature actually consists of plagiarisms."

With all the fervor he is capable of, Friedell believes that "God and the soul are the only realities, but the world unreal." The palette of Friedell's critique of the world lacks the color of moral indignation; but any doubt of that "serene message" unbalanced his philosophical reserve. An early essay by the German philosopher, Eduard von Hartmann, somewhat polemical against the "economy of Salvation" so offended the author of the *Cultural History* that he refused ever to take a look at the considerably more pertinent mature writings of the delinquent. (This reminds one of Schnick, who tore up the whole paper because he disliked what it said about his master.)

The author of the *Cultural History* sees, of course, events and figures of the past with the eyes of a twentieth-century man (the "pathos of distance"), but also the way a contemporary might have seen them (i.e., exposing nearness). This twofold perspective lifts Friedell's presentations from the plane into the two-and-a-half dimensions of the relief. He establishes a hierarchy of cultural spheres. On the top of the pyramid he puts religion; at its base, economic life. In fact, economics is not considered to partake of culture at all, but to be merely one of her precondi-

tions. Consequently Friedell, although he considers Karl Marx "the most influential scholar of the nineteenth century," calls Marx-sponsored economic determinism "a barbarian banality."

Friedell's three volumes are rather rough-and-ready with such forceful labeling, and no veil of courtesy covers their author's dislikes. The above-mentioned Eduard von Hartmann he calls "the yokel of pessimism, . . . a clowning stooge" of David Friedrich Strauss (the materialistic biographer of Jesus). Strauss himself he identifies as "the perfect type of the intelligent ass." Although he did not deny that the French Revolution had some merits, Friedell considered it, on second thought, "brilliant trash." Psychoanalysis—a much-whipped hobbyhorse of his—is credited with having opened some new mental roads, but at the end of these roads he sees "a world ugly and without God." (Rilke, in his *War-time Letters,* said it somewhat more pleasingly: "In driving out his [man's] devils, it [psychoanalysis] offends his angels.")

IV

The *Cultural History* tells a "legend of modern times." Its vision and its interpretation of historic events are based on three cardinal ideas.

The first: A Superior Will determines the course of the world; the drama of mankind develops according to an outline conceived by God. And the *Cultural History* makes no attempt to discover that outline. But with the finished parts of the play, which are its subject, the *Cultural History* deals like a dramaturgist who makes scenes much tighter than the playwright (in this case, reality) has written them.

The second idea (taken from Oswald Spengler): The history of mankind moves not in straight lines but in closed cycles. The *Cultural History* finds such a cycle—a perfect one—in the six centuries which it calls modern times. Its beginning is located in the year of the Black Plague, 1348, interpreted as the great trauma that brought about a spiritual regrouping of European humanity. It took European man a hundred years to overcome the psychosis caused by the shock of that great malady. Around the middle of the fifteenth century, he discovers himself as a cogitating being; and from there on the whole history of modern times is nothing but the history of world conquest by man's mind. The cycle closes with another great trauma—World War I. Man begins to doubt

his mind, and signs appear on the horizon to announce a complete reversal of his world awareness.

The third leading idea: Times are altogether the creation of the Great Man, just as the Great Man is altogether the creation of his times. The genius is no accidental product of his epoch but (though, paradoxically, the two have nothing to do with each other) its most concise expression. Geniuses are the "representative men" of their age. In them it reveals its "blood circulation and pulse frequency," its specific pace of life. They are "the compendium into which the desires and the works of their contemporaries seem to have been condensed." In the *Cultural History* Descartes, for example, is the quintessential figure of the Baroque, which period is simply called "the Cartesian age." Voltaire is the French Enlightenment in person, Shakespeare the lens collecting all the rays of the Renaissance, and in Nietzsche's life the *Cultural History* sees recapitulated the whole venture of modern times.

According to Friedell, the mission of modern times was to get rid of Rationalism. The Renaissance identified Rationalism with what it considered the highest value—with art. The Reformation became reconciled to it as something given by God. The Baroque denied it, i.e., demoted reality to a secondary fact. Enlightenment tried to immunize itself to the "poison" of Rationalism by getting used to it.

The judgments of the *Cultural History* are intentionally one-sided, personal, subjective. "Even if a mortal had the strength to do it" (i.e., to write an objective, impartial history), his achievement would remain unnoticed, "because no other mortal would find the strength to read such a boring book." As to its methods of presentation, the *Cultural History* follows the rule that "drawing is omitting." It works with a conscious will to be fragmentary and clipped. A significant detail substitutes for the whole event, a single characteristic line replaces the complex features of a man's image. Consequently, Friedell's book assigns a big role to the anecdote which illuminates a situation or a figure with drastic brightness.

The core of Friedell's *Cultural History* is the history of philosophy. The work gives spacious room to portraits of the great philosophers and to the analysis of their works. And equally spacious room is given to art. But the *Cultural History* claims "well-nigh everything" as its subject. Different ages show their true desires and tendencies, their strengths and weaknesses, their splendors and fallacies, in what is called mores—the

modes of living. Consequently, the *Cultural History* deals (in addition to philosophy and art) not only with science, state, church, but also with homes and clothes, with holidays and funerals, with correspondence, love and marriage, comfort, horticulture, social life, folk songs and table manners. Of Louis XIV, for example, we learn not only that his government brought to highest perfection "such important elements of the modern state as bureaucracy, police and standing armies," but we also hear that his dinner consists ordinarily of "four bowls of different soups, a whole pheasant, one partridge and a big bowl of salad, mutton with garlic and sauce, ham, one dish of pastry, fruit and marmalades."

In spite of their scholarly content, Friedell's three volumes are a work of fiction. Clearly, fiction has built these three spacious structures according to fiction's inherent laws; and science and philosophy live there only as tenants.

IV

The German edition of the *Cultural History* is dedicated to Max Reinhardt who had discovered, or rather invented, the author for the stage. But the English edition was dedicated to G. B. Shaw—a very proper homage: the poet of the *Unpleasant Plays* and the poet of the *Cultural History* are indeed brothers in the spirit of irony and reform, or, anyway, cousins. The acknowledging letters from London sent "greetings to the Austrian Shaw, from the English one." Less understandable is the dedication of the first magnificent volume of Friedell's *Cultural History of Ancient Times* (as yet not translated into English): "To Knut Hamsun." The volume appeared in Switzerland in 1936, when Hamsun had already said his clamorous "amen" to the German curse. But then, of course, Friedell did not read newspapers. The Norwegian accepted with enthusiasm: "The dedication of your book was a greater honor than the Nobel Prize." Friedell had not yet finished the second volume of the *Cultural History of Ancient Times* when the Nazis, so near Hamsun's heart, moved the author to the morgue.

Friedell's great historical opus towers over the rest of his literary production. There was *The Judas Tragedy;* a little book on Jesus Christ; an anthology of satirical gems selected from the works of the great Austrian playwright, John Nestroy; another anthology of anecdotes by and about the Viennese poet, Peter Altenberg; and finally, a volume of Frie-

dell aphorisms, his *Small Philosophy,* published in 1930. (A sample aphorism: "When Jupiter was in love, he came disguised as a bull, as a rain of gold, as a singing swan, or as a cloud. For women love bulls, rains of gold, singing swans, and, particularly, clouds. But never would Jupiter come as Jupiter.")

A lot has happened since the publication of the *Cultural History of Modern Times,* certainly enough to revalue historical evaluations. Many a truth of yesterday is a casualty of today's experience, many a great event of the past has lost its greatness, many a glorified figure its glory. (Hitler has liquidated Napoleon's magic much more radically than the most spiteful Napoleon debunkers could ever have done.) The present throws its deep shadow into the past, changes the shades of light and dark in the landscape of yesterday. The pictures drawn by historians are losing accuracy and validity. All this considered, Friedell's *Cultural History* has nicely survived the Decline of the West or, anyway, its dress rehearsal. A fascinating book, it remains well preserved in its own spirit. It can stand the improved measurements we must now apply to intellectual products. Nothing in this book has become outdated—except, perhaps, the serenity of the spirit it reflects.

Some Observations on Naturalism, So Called, in Fiction

By JAMES T. FARRELL

LET ME BEGIN THIS ESSAY by telling about a young professor with whom I have had considerable correspondence. He first came to my attention when a mutual friend sent me one of his first articles. In the introductory part of the essay, the young scholar attempted to define naturalism in terms of an equation suggested by symbolic logic. I do not recall the exact letters in this logical equation but at all events, it contained three letters, and ran something like this: F + D = N. Let us say that in this equation, F equals fiction, D equals determinism and N equals naturalism. Fiction plus determinism equals naturalism.

The rest of his article, as I recall it, attempted to give some content to his equation. The purpose of the young professor was, in effect, to define naturalism in such a way as to satisfy his own uncertain worries about the "issue" of free will versus determinism. He was strongly attracted to books which he classified as naturalistic, and at the same time he constantly criticized these books for not proving that free will exists in the logical sense. In substance, he was trying to explain why many modern novelists have not been Protestant theologians.

I had a long correspondence with him over the course of several years, and I read a number of his articles. In my letters I attempted, with many citations, to show that there were many differences in style, theme, subject matter and types of characters in the books he called naturalistic. I further tried to show, and I think with good evidence, that there were more differences than there were similarities among the writers whom

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Novelist JAMES T. FARRELL's latest book is presumably *The Name is Fogarty: Private Papers on Public Matters* (Vanguard) though his authorship has been disputed or confused with that of Jonathan Titulescu Fogarty, "President, Secretary and Treasurer of the Jonathan Titulescu Fogarty Society for the Discovery of the World Brain" (see *New York Times Book Review*, "Letters to the Editor," February 19), and husband of disillusioned Mrs. Bridget O'Halloran Fogarty (see *N.Y.T.B.R.*, "Letters to the Editor," April 9).

he was lumping together, and that they all had failed to do what everyone else had failed to do—to give a final and conclusive answer to the question of free will versus determinism. He expressed admiration for some of my books—but then and later he continued constantly and persistently, to chide me for not demonstrating an answer to the age-old riddle of free will and determinism. He seemed very disturbed that I was not able to satisfy him, and, additionally, that I didn't seem to consider it an important question for literary criticism.

Later on I tried to get him to pay some attention to, to read and apply his own attitudes and problems to a truly great novel which deals thematically with this very question: Tolstoy's *War and Peace*. I got nowhere. Rather than that, he kept coming back to contemporary novels, and again and again he discovered, to his own satisfaction, that these novels did not prove the "existence" of free will. Finally, he came to the conclusion that naturalism is a method of writing which can be successful only when the characters are poor, dirty, ugly and no good. In passing, I observed both in his letters and his articles that he used many invidious and disgusting adjectives to describe the characters in novels which he professed to admire. When "naturalism" attempted to deal with "nicer" people, he decided, it failed. Why did it fail? Because, again, it did not prove that free will exists.

Finally, this young man, reviewing one of my novels, summarized the essential points which he had made repeatedly in our long correspondence. Now, in my letters, I had gone to great detail to emphasize that I didn't agree with him, and that I didn't consider the problem he posed as relevant to what I was doing. But he seemed to be under some great need to have me agree with him about free will and determinism and also about the "dirty characters," so-called, whom I had put in my books. His feelings were hurt because I wouldn't agree with him. And one of the remarks I had made seemed, if I might judge from his correspondence, particularly disturbing to him. I observed that he was really attempting to create a category of naturalism, and then, to use the category as a means of judgment. In other words, he was thinking about literature categorically. And his efforts to establish a category were leading him away from his real problem, one we all face when we read a book. It is this—how are we going to handle our emotions? He was confusing judgment with categorization, and in addition, making foolish

predictions about writing. For instance, on the basis of the way in which he fitted Theodore Dreiser into his categorical scheme he predicted, in effect, that because Dreiser was a naturalist he couldn't finish any more books. Dreiser was then at work finishing novels which this young man "logically" proved couldn't be completed because of the so-called dilemma which Dreiser allegedly found himself in—an inability to discover a conclusive answer to this question of free will versus determinism.

I could multiply examples of this kind of thinking about naturalism many times. When I recall experiences like these and when I then read some of the statements and attacks on "embattled" naturalists in literature, I begin to wonder who is embattled—the writers or the critics? And I sometimes ask myself this question: Is it possible that some of these novels, so unfairly and insultingly and irrelevantly attacked by critics, menace the feelings of certainty and security in the minds of critics? Might it be that they are afraid of these books?

II

Emile Zola is usually characterized as the father of modern naturalism. And quite frequently Zola's "The Experimental Novel" is cited by critics as the gospel of literary naturalism. More than one critic has judged any number of books to be defective, and even dangerous, on the assumption that these books are illustrations of what Zola said in this particular essay in the year 1878. My own work has been attacked on the basis of Zola's essay although I must confess I did not read it until recently. Likewise, I had written five novels and many short stories before I had ever read a novel of Zola's. I made my first acquaintance with Zola as a novelist through *Germinal* in 1936.

Now, what did Zola really say in "The Experimental Novel"? He relied heavily on the writing of a French physiologist, Claude Bernard.[1] In a time when it was argued that medicine was not a science but an art, Bernard claimed that it could become a science. Zola applied this and many other conceptions of Bernard almost literally to the field of the novel. He equated art and science without making any clear distinction. For instance, Zola did not look upon the questions he raised in terms of

[1] I must add that I have not read the work of Claude Bernard, but Zola quotes him so copiously in this, as well as in other essays, that one gets a fairly clear idea of the outlines of Bernard's thought.

the difference between problems in the laboratory and those in the writer's study.

What was paramount with Zola was determinism. Paraphrasing Bernard, he declared: "There is an absolute determinism in the existing conditions of natural phenomena, for the living and for inanimate bodies."

Zola conceived of determinism as "determining the conditions necessary for the manifestation of phenomena." Noting that Claude Bernard had found that there were fixed laws governing the human body, he wrote that it could be proclaimed without fear of being in error that the hour would come when the laws of thought and of passion would be formulated in a like manner. And he asserted that in terms of this determinism, the naturalistic novelist was a scientist, who was analyzing man in both his individual and his social relation. Thus, he declared: ". . . We [novelists] operate on the characters, the passions, on the human and social data, in the same way that the chemist and the physicist operate on living beings. Determinism dominates everything."

Here, a longer quotation will give a fuller sense of Zola's view.

> Man is not alone: he lives in society, in a social condition: and consequently, for us novelists, the social condition increasingly modifies the phenomenon. Indeed our great study is just there, a reciprocal effect of society upon the individual and the individual on society. . . . We are not yet able to prove that the social condition is . . . physical and chemical. . . . We can act upon the social condition, in acting upon the phenomena of which we have made ourselves masters of men. And this is what constitutes the experimental novel: to possess a knowledge of the mechanism of the phenomena inherent in man, to show the masking of the intellectual and sensory manifestations under the influence of heredity and environment, such as physiology shall give them to us, then finally to exhibit man living in a social condition produced by himself, which modifies daily, and in the heart of which he himself experiences a continual transformation. Thus, then, we lean on physiology: we take man from the hand of the physiologist solely in order to continue the solution of the problem, and to solve scientifically how men behave when they are in society.

Affirming these views, Zola looked forward to the day when the experimental novelist, the naturalist, would bring forth decisive results of a scientific character. He emphasized the word, *experimental,* declaring that the novelist would show by experiments the ways that passion acts in certain given conditions, that these experiments would serve as a

means of going from the known to the unknown, and that the experimental novelist would thus act as a scientist who went from the known to the unknown insofar as man was concerned. As such, he was to be contrasted with the "idealistic novelist," who deliberately remained in the unknown, and who clung to all sorts of religious and philosophical prejudices "under the extraordinary pretense that the unknown is nobler and more beautiful than the known."

And then, in answer to the charge that the work of experimental novelists needed justification because it dealt with the ugly, Zola quoted Bernard as follows:

> "You will never reach fully fruitful and luminous generalizations on the phenomena of life until you have experimented yourself and stirred up in the hospital, the amphitheatre, the laboratory, the fetid or palpitating source of life. If it were necessary for me to give a comparison which would explain my sentiments on the science of life, I should say that it is a superb salon, flooded with light, which you can only reach by passing through a long and nauseating kitchen."

Zola saw the experimental method as a means whereby scientific authority would be substituted for personal authority. With this, he also asserted that naturalism is not a school; ". . . it is nothing but a vast movement, a march forward in which everyone is a workman according to his genius. All theories are admitted and the theory which carries the most weight is the one which explains the most."

Zola was opposed to the supernatural. He believed that science had already demonstrated that the supernatural was not real or true. He saw in science the intellectual leadership of the nineteenth century, and he insisted that the novelist have a place in this movement. Opposing scientists who would not give writers such a place, he declared:

> I have remarked that a great many of the most intelligent savants, jealous of the scientific authority which they enjoy, would very willingly confine literature to the ideal. They themselves seem to feel the need of taking a little recreation in the world of lies after the fatigue of their exact labor, and they are fond of amusing themselves with the most daring hypotheses, and with fictions which they know perfectly well to be false and ridiculous.

To Zola, romanticism and the ideal were lies, that is, unreal and untrue and undemonstrable. Rather than trade in these "lies," as he styled them, the novelist should have equal place with the scientist, and should work as he does. Zola here established a conception of truth as the ideal, and he held that the artist must adhere to it. He believed that the feeling

of the artist must "always be subject to the higher law of truth and nature." And he added that ". . . each time that a truth is established by the savants," the writers should immediately abandon their hypotheses to adopt this truth; otherwise they will remain deliberately in error without benefitting anyone. And in terms of these attitudes he also proclaimed the death of "metaphysical man," and the advent of "physiological man."

In a recent lecture, "From Poe to Valery," delivered at the Library of Congress, T. S. Eliot made an excellent observation which can be applied to Zola's theory of the experimental novel. Speaking of the theory which Valery held as a poet, Eliot said:

> Here I should like to point out the difference between a theory of poetry propounded by a student of aesthetics, and the same theory as held by a poet. It is one thing when it is simply an account of how the poet writes without knowing it, and another thing when the poet himself writes consciously according to that theory. In affecting writing, the theory becomes a different thing from what it was merely as an explanation of how the poet writes.

Zola wrote consciously in terms of his theory. But at the same time that we recognize this fact, if we wish to understand what has happened and what is still happening in literature, we must not test Zola, and a whole series of novels which have been written since Zola's time, merely by a literal-minded effort to correlate and to judge specific works in terms of this theory. We must keep in mind that, up to the present time, no one has succeeded in creating a perfect theory of aesthetics. There is no aesthetic constitution for the novel in the sense that there is a constitution of the United States of America. To apply Zola's theory in a literal-minded manner to his own works and by it also to damn the work of many later writers, as they have been damned, would be to blind ourselves to understanding and to blind those we might influence.

Zola's attempt to embody scientific methods, procedures and conclusions in the novel, should be seen as an effort to incorporate in literature something of the developing mental climate of his own times. Today it is rather easy to make detailed criticisms of his theory, to formulate a clearer statement of scientific method, and to displace the copy theory of knowledge implied in his ideas with a better theory of epistemology. However, such a task is not now a particularly important one to fulfill. The inadequacies of Zola's theory today concern the critics of naturalism, but few others.

The late V. F. Parrington, in *The Beginnings of Critical Realism in*

America (Volume III of his *Main Currents in American Thought*), discussed the influence of science in American thought during the latter part of the nineteenth century. He observed:

> To speak exactly, it is not so much science that has taken possession of the mind, as certain postulates of science, certain philosophies presumably derived from science, and justified by science, which we have felt bound to incorporate in our thinking as a hundred years before the conclusions of the Enlightenment had been incorporated.

Parrington's observations can be applied to Zola. The novelist did set down a series of postulates, "presumably derived from science," which permitted him to widen the boundaries of that which was admissible in modern literature. He contributed to enlarging the area of human conduct which can be described by a novelist: he also changed and expanded the kind of theme which could be embodied in novels. He contributed to greater liberty of expression for the artist. His postulates, drawn from science, also gave him greater confidence, provided him with hypotheses which would help him look anew at the material of life, of characters and events. He risked hypotheses concerning heredity which, he recognized, were not completely established by science in his own time, but which seemed plausible and for which there appeared to be some scientific evidence. Was he scientific or unscientific? We have here an open question which we cannot definitely answer with confidence. In passing, I might suggest that Dr. Herman Muller, Nobel Prize winner, has, in his book *Out Of The Night* offered a very plausible and scientifically founded argument which gives credence to a theory of hereditary influence. Dr. Muller's theory is more refined, more scientifically grounded than were the ideas of heredity that Zola held to. But if we attempt to deal with Zola's fiction on strictly scientific grounds, we may flatter ourselves with the conceit that we know more than we do, and we will get away from what we can more fruitfully discuss.

The American philosopher, George Herbert Mead, in *The Philosophy of the Act,* made a pertinent distinction between scientific knowledge and information about science. Mead saw science as an evolving system of knowledge. In this evolving system, he contended that what remained of scientific endeavor was the facts which were discovered. And his theories indicated that, while he was a relativist, he more or less held that a fact had the character of factualness within its proper frame of reference. But Mead pointed out that in this system

of science, the generalizations or conclusions change. We know this to be so. Mead further asserted that scientific knowledge was really gained only when you performed the experiments yourself, when you actually experience the gaining of the knowledge, the finding out of the facts. Merely to read about this finding of the fact, as Mead properly noted, only gives us information. Zola, then, when he wrote about science, and when he stated his conclusions and hypotheses, was speaking largely in terms of information, the scientific information of his time. To the contrary, when he went out and gathered facts, and was proceeding with the scientific spirit and method, he then was gaining knowledge. He was, then, trying to write with respect for the spirit of truth. This, it seems to me, is what remains important in his legacy.

Oscar Cargill, in *Intellectual America: Ideas on the March,* dismisses Zola with a patronizing air which borders on contempt. Asserting that his essays, particularly "The Experimental Novel," committed a kind of misdemeanor, Cargill declares that Zola has survived his indiscretions; and he reduces Zola's conceptions merely to a view of "pessimistic determinism." Here Cargill illustrates how easily one can fail to interpret a theory of art or aesthetics or of the novel in terms of its relationship, not to truth in general, but to the artist's own work.

Zola's theory of naturalism is not so important today for its scientific as for its historical relevance. His theory should not be regarded simply as pessimistic determinism applied to literature. Nor has he been responsible for a school of novelists who have written books which only describe man as a "trapped animal," or as the critics of naturalism have declared, of man like a rat in a cage. Zola, in fact, exhibited a boldness and adventurousness of spirit when he attempted to formulate a set of postulates for the novel which would be consistent with science and consistent with the mental climate of his own time. It should be obvious to us, in the year 1950, that scientific advances, both theoretical and practical, have changed not only our mental universe but our way of life. Zola sensed that this was happening in his own day and attempted to deal with it in literature.

III

Just what has the problem of free will versus determinism to do with literature? Discussions of this problem are now usually of a piece

with those concerning heredity versus environment, in which both elements appear to be solid forces in absolute conflict. When we deal with such broad and all-inclusive categories, it is more than well for us to recall an observation by Whitehead, who warned against committing the "fallacy of misplaced concretion." It is important here to observe that usually those who pose this question, pose it in terms of a flat either/or. Is man free or is he not free? Does man have free will, or is he completely determined? To me, this is an unanswerable question. John Dewey has somewhere observed that there are some questions which are not unsolved, they are outlived. My own view is that the problem of free will versus determinism has simply been outlived.[2]

Furthermore, we must decide what type of a question we are posing. Are we asking a logical or an empirical question? Are we going to answer this question by a logical argument, or are we going to answer it with the use of empirical evidence, and are we going to base our answer on facts which we can verify? Now, we are here dealing with an inclusive, over-all problem. Usually, when we deal with it, logical arguments are asserted, pro or con. This is especially so in the case of those who argue that man has free will.

Keeping this in mind, we then might ask—what has this to do with a novel? How will the assumption that man has free will make someone a better writer? In what way does one or another answer to the question of free will versus determinism really relate to the work of fiction? Here I think it important to note the kind of answer a critic of naturalism will give when he warrants or premises his criticism on the basis of an assumption of free will. If he makes a merely logical argument, all that he is

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[2]It is my personal opinion that a number of the literary critics of "naturalism" who base their criticisms on free will do so on grounds of temperament. This is understandable. However, a man's temperamental bent cannot be accepted as a justification for the distortion of facts, the false attribution of views to others, and worse, downright slander. Personally, let me add that I am not a monistic determinist. I do not, however, look on free will as an inherent attribute of man; rather, I believe that free will is an achievement of men, gained individually and collectively, through knowledge and the acquisition of control, both over nature and over self. Let me suggest here, to the interested reader, William James's essay, "The Dilemma of Determinism" in *The Will to Believe* (New York, 1909). I do not agree with it wholly, but consider it, unlike many discussions of this question, to be illuminating and instructive.

doing is proving his own premises, for you cannot prove that anything exists in the world with pure logic. And, usually, those who criticize naturalism from the viewpoint of free will are doing no more than this, although in a great many instances, their logic happens to be bad rather than good. If the question is put as an empirical question, then, all that these literary critics and professors can do is to build up a case on the basis of information. Their arguments have no more necessary scientific ground than do the assertions about heredity which Zola held and applied in his novels. As literary people, we are either reducing literature to a question of logic, or else we are trying to resolve literary questions by talking in terms of sciences which we do not work in. The empirical answer to this question would demand scientific work in specialized fields, such as physiology and biology, as well as psychiatry. In addition to this, we might add that deterministic hypotheses, whether we call them true or false, have had a value in science. We may further note that Freud used a deterministic hypothesis in his clinical investigations. If we keep this in mind, we can say that usually those who dispute over literary naturalism in terms of free will versus determinsm are generally opposing the scientific and antiscientific spirit. Zola's attitude was scientific. The attitude of many of his critics was antiscientific. Thus, while Zola was limited when he opposed the physiological man to the metaphysical, he was observing pertinently when he spoke of the metaphysical man.

What is really involved in some of these attacks and criticisms is a view of human nature. One of the very important points which we must keep in mind is that the artist is attempting to present his view of human nature and also of characters and of events. As you will recall, Zola denied that art was an expression of personal views. He insisted that scientific authority must be established in place of the personal authority of the artist. I think he was mistaken. Today we are inclined to be much less optimistic than Zola was. We know that we can know less, and that the unknown is much more vast than many imagined it to be in the nineteenth century. We cannot proclaim with the same old confidence, as Zola did, that the artist must abandon theories when science has disproved them. Proof is a much more complicated process than he thought it would be. With this, it might be added that some scientific warrant can be given, at least tentatively, to substantiate the possible validity of

types of art which Zola might have described as unrealistic, idealistic, metaphysical or romantic—as lies.

We can translate Zola's theories so that they can, with many qualifications, have one significant value at the present time. Zola insisted that the experimental novelist must apply methods of observation and analysis. The sense of what was valid in Zola's theories can be included in the statement that the realistic novelist seeks to explore the nature of experience. Zola attempted to do that. Serious writers make a similar attempt at the present time. In some instances, a writer will start with a metaphysical orientation. In other instances, he may start with attitudes or postulates which have some ground in scientific discovery. Marcel Proust, for instance, organized his books in terms of metaphysical conceptions which had some correspondence with Bergson's theories of time and continuity. Bergson, it is to be noted here, was critical of science. Was or was not Proust a realist? Was or was not Proust a naturalist? Whether we answer these questions yes or no, we will still face the question of what Proust means to us when we read him. The same applies if we ask these questions concerning a writer like Dreiser.

But these questions of realism, of naturalism, of free will versus determinism do not seem to me the most important ones. Let me now ask a simpler question. What is all the shooting about? I suggest that you try to make up your own mind about that question. I also suggest that you attempt to read a book in terms of some of the premises and criticisms of the critics of naturalism, and then to ask yourself—do you get any fresh insight? Do you feel anything? Do you learn anything? Are you excited? What happens to your emotions? I would say that when you read a book, the handling of your own emotions, the resolution of your own feelings is much more important than any kind of judgment you make about whether the book is good or bad, especially if that judgment is made in terms of questions which are pseudo-philosophical and pseudo-scientific.

IV

Words such as *realism* and *naturalism* have been applied to many writers. Various definitions of these words have been given. One is that of Cargill, who says that naturalistic writers have in common a theory of pessimistic determinism. Others, in attempting to establish a common meaning for naturalism, have come forth with definitions which are

mutually exclusive. Some hold that naturalism is optimistic.[3] Others believe it pessimistic, and will say that if a book has a hopeful ending, it can't be naturalistic. I do not know all of the definitions of naturalism, but I have come across enough to know that they are many. I am reminded here of the state of psychology fifty or sixty years ago, when a so-called instinct psychology was dominant. Apparently, there was a competition among academic psychologists at that time for finding new phrases for new instincts, real or alleged. I get the impression that the same kind of competition must be going on among those who are attempting to get a definition of naturalism. If you accept someone else's definition, you are not original. We have been getting that kind of a situation insofar as the problem of naturalism in literature is concerned.

I have, personally, been called a naturalist, and I have never denied it. However, my own conception of naturalism is not that which is usually attributed to me. I have always used the words naturalism and materialism as synonymous. Possibly this has been a mistake. I would really prefer the word naturalism, and I would define it in a Deweyian sense. By naturalism, I mean that whatever happens in this world must ultimately be explainable in terms of events in this world. I assume or believe that all events are explainable in terms of natural origins rather than extranatural or supernatural origins. Although this assumption underlies what I have written, I do not write novels to prove or disprove this assumption. I write novels in order to try to reveal what life seems to me to be like.[4] I write novels as part of an attempt to explore the nature of experience. If we have a conception of naturalism which is tighter than mine, we are in danger of becoming rigid. I think that the remarks already made about Zola suggest the possibility.

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[3]In passing, let me say that despite his determinism, despite the character of many of his novels, Zola was fundamentally an optimist: Zola was a man who probably declared: "The truth is on the march." The man who boldly assumes that the truth is on the march cannot be such a die-hard pessimist.

[4]Recently, a reader asked me why my character Danny O'Neill, of my tetralogy, escaped from his environment, and did not end as did Studs Lonigan. On reflection, the only answer I could give was this one: Danny O'Neill was a character who determined and who chose to change. Frequently, at least, defeat and disintegration, when described, appear as though inevitable, and thus determined: to the contrary, growth and change do not at all seem inevitable, and, in fact, even seem to be so inexplicable as to appear fortuitous or accidental.

V

Another way of looking at these questions is in terms of neecssity and of tragedy. Some contemporary criticism bases itself on the Aristotelian conception of tragedy. At its most banal level, this type is not criticism or analysis at all. It often amounts merely to a kind of self-evident criticism to the effect that such and such a modern writer is not Goethe or Euripides. When such criticism goes beyond the self-evident, certain points based upon Aristotle's conception of tragedy are applied.

Aristotle held that in order for a character to be a tragic figure, that character must be superior. Of tragedy he said: "A tragedy . . . is the imitation of an action that is serious, and also, as having magnitude, complete in itself." And he added: "Tragedy is essentially an imitation not of persons, but of action and of life, of happiness and misery." The function of the poet was to describe not the thing that had happened, but "a kind of thing that might happen," i.e., what is possible is deemed "probable or necessary." When a play is truly tragic, it induces pity and terror in the audience: "pity is occasioned by undeserved misfortune, and fear [terror] by that of one like ourselves."

The tragic deeds of characters in the Aristotelian conception were necessary either to be done or not to be done, and the action could be undertaken either knowingly or unknowingly. This exhausted all of the possibilities. But for the character to be tragic, he had to be "better than the ordinary man."

There are two points involved here which I want to stress. One is the conception of the hero as a superior person, the other the conception of Fate in the Greek drama. The Greek conception of Fate or of Nemesis, as is well known, involves the actions of a God who controlled human destinies. The tragic hero, superior to the ordinary man, a male rather than a female or a slave (but not necessarily a male) met his fate, suffered, and therein lies the essence of his tragedy. It well may be that writers today are far inferior to the Greek dramatists. However, this inferiority cannot be cured by adopting the attitudes which the Greeks reveal concerning Fate or Nemesis, or the conception of a tragic character as a superior person. In modern life, few people can be superior in the Greek sense. And the ordinary person, today, does not possess the freedom in circumstances necessary to a tragedy after the manner of Greek drama.

Quite frequently, tragedy in our society has a representational and a social character. Involved in modern tragic characters are such factors as the following: powerlessness because of one's economic position; lack of experience because of social and economic position, or because of accidents at birth which are revealed in the type of parents one has; suffering of consequences of an economic and political character which are far beyond a person's individual control. All of this is obvious, and yet the obvious is overlooked when a literal conception of tragedy based upon Aristotle's theory and the example of Greek drama is rigidly held. Today, we assume, with some warrant, that social forces, social factors, social pressures and tendencies play a role similar to that played by the Gods, by Fate and Nemesis in ancient Greece. And this is not reducible to mere difference in postulates. It involves social and technological changes, and also what Whitehead styled "a mental climate."

We live in a different society and we live in a different mental climate from that of Aristotle. Man does not, today, believe himself to be the center of the world, as he once did. He does not now look upon his life as a drama of salvation in the way and to the extent that he did in the Middle Ages. Even the character and the nature of knowledge is different. This is to be seen in the scientific superseding of the Aristotelian world. Substantially, it is revealed in a conception of the world in terms of relationships rather than of essence. All of these changes have been and will continue to be registered in literature. We must take these developments into account, when we concern ourselves with the reasons why and how naturalism, so-called, has developed. It has been an attempt to meet and to reveal and to explore the nature of experience in the modern world.

VI

Many writers, strikingly different from one another, have been called naturalists; thus the brothers de Goncourt, Flaubert, Zola in France, and in America Frank Norris, Stephen Crane, Theodore Dreiser, John Dos Passos, and others. Those linked together as naturalists in terms of a definition like that of Professor Cargill are too often taken as representatives of a school. General similarities are stressed, while significant differences are neglected. Within the framework of the naturalistic tradition, there is an extraordinary variety of theme, subject matter, attitude, ideas

expressed or implied, types of character, and so on. This is apparent on its face. For instance, *Madame Bovary* by Flaubert, *Germinal* by Zola, *The Red Badge of Courage* by Stephen Crane, *Sister Carrie* by Dreiser, *U.S.A.* by Dos Passos, could be cited as naturalistic novels. But what insight do we gain by linking them together in terms of a watered-down generalization?

These and other books, linked together in this tradition, are all part of the effort by writers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to come to terms with experience. They have been written in the spirit of truth. If they are part of a tradition, that tradition has had more force and more impact, and has been able to nourish and give more energy to successive generations than any other tradition. This is most especially so in America. The majority of critics of this tradition have been exponents of another, the genteel tradition in America. Speaking of the latter, Parrington aptly observed that its essence was to be found in "a refined aestheticism, that professed to discover the highest virtue in shutting one's eyes to disagreeable fact and the highest law in the law of convention." So-called American realistic writers have grown up in a different American world from that of the nineteenth century, particularly of New England. They have lived different kinds of lives. They have different origins.

But they are attacked in the name of nineteenth-century writers. In the light of this, I should like to quote from a long review, "The Deflowering of New England," by the critic Stanley Edgar Hyman in *The Hudson Review* (winter, 1950). Mr. Hyman, who shares at least some of the attitudes to which I have alluded in this paper, criticizes a number of biographies of Hawthorne, Henry James, Thoreau, Emerson and Henry Adams and Melville—all of whom, let me say, I admire as writers. He writes as follows:

> . . . there is the embarrassing and confusing question of the private domestic lives of these writers, that is, not to put too fine a point on it, sex. On a scale of healthy and normal domestic life, Thoreau, priggish, terrified of women, dependent on his mother, and frigidly ascetic, would be at the bottom, followed closely by the spinterish James; and Hawthorne and Adams, both of them fortunate in storybook marriages (until the death of Marian Adams) would be somewhere at the top. And yet, dare we say that the latter lives were fuller, or rounder, or even happier? Wouldn't a scale of tough-mindedness, of living in ecological balance with the world and dying with a minimum

> of whining be just as apt to run the other way? If Emerson's first marriage was passionate, short-lived, and tragic, and his second cold, long-lived, fecund, contented, which one helped his work? What is the condition of health for the artist, is there any, and how would we know it if we saw it?

And then at the end of the review, in which Hyman has defended these writers whom he considers the best to have been developed in America from dull and careless critics—at least those whom he considers to be such—he writes: ". . . we are all simmering, simmering: who will be the new Emerson, or even the exhumer of the old Emerson, to bring us to a boil?"

I see in this quotation, as I see in many of those who have criticized the so-called naturalistic tradition, a feeling of insecurity, a lack of sureness, a timidity, although it is often masked by an authoritative use of the hallowed names of the past, and by an association with these hallowed names. I see here a tendency to cling to stereotypes of what literature and the artist should be, to cling to these in times when literature is slowly being remade and changed in a world that is both changing and dangerous. Of course it is one's privilege to cling to elegant and hallowed stereotypes. Likewise, it is one's privilege to criticize any tendency in writing. As long as this remains a matter of criticism, it is within bounds. However, there is another quality to some of these criticisms.

It is a curious fact that it is the writers of this so-called naturalistic tradition who are the ones who have constantly had to bear the brunt of the struggle for freedom of literary expression. It is the writers of this tradition who have been constantly hailed into court, who have had to defend their work at law, who have had to face the application of the police power. It is the writers of this tradition whose books have been constantly excluded in libraries, in colleges, from bookstores, from being transported across the boundaries of even democratic countries. The consequences of the best work in this tradition have been an increase in feeling and a desire for more freedom, more frankness, more understanding in the world.

The consequences of the obscurantist criticism of this tradition has been more or less in the direction of censorship, or narrowness, or tightness of feeling and thought. Today, many of these criticisms seem strangely arrogant. It is, today, the critics of this genteel tradition who are asking somebody to boil them up, who are asking someone to dis-

cover something in the past which will help them reach this state of boiling. If ever there were the blind talking about the blind, here it is.

In his article titled "Republican Literature" Zola discussed politicians, specifically the various Republican politicians who seemed to hate literature. Speaking to those who should have been his allies [Zola himself was a staunch Republican] he said that the only thing they could give him and the only thing they could give other writers was liberty. As long as liberty is restrained—we have very much of it here—the tradition which has been so condemned is likely to be able to maintain itself as one of the great tendencies in modern writing. It has been nourished by great writers; it has been nourished in the spirit of truth and free expression. It has retained sufficient vitality so that in more than one country it has been constantly, persistently, repeatedly attacked with the same arguments, the same charges, the same type of obscurantism. It has been buried more than any other literary tendency in our time. And yet, it does not stay buried. I believe further that I am not misstating the facts when I insist that it has contributed toward nourishing a feeling of freedom.

I have always maintained that all artistic tendencies should have free play for expression, and that there should be a kind of free competition between them so that each tendency may have its chance to attract those who may gain from it. I have always believed that there should be richness and variety and art in literature, in philosophy and thought. In speaking here of naturalism, the tendency with which I have been associated, I do not in any way want anyone to think that I am attempting to establish this tendency in any authoritative way over any other tendency. Those who don't like so-called naturalistic novels do not have to read them. I do not urge them to. All I would state is that this tendency has been the outstanding one in the last century or so in shaping contemporary literature, and it has an *avant-garde* insofar as all the practical considerations of the freedom of the arts is concerned. It has been the tendency more than any other which has produced writers who have fought for and succeeded to a very considerable degree in maintaining their free rights of expression in all countries where there is a democratic process. And with that, it has encouraged a spirit of truth and free inquiry. The problems which the psychologists, the sociologists, and so many others today show much concern over are the very problems

which agitated, concerned and provoked many of these realistic writers and impelled them to the creation of books, some of which became lasting books in world culture. This is sufficient justification. If we accept the idea that the only real answer is to be found in the consequences, the consequences of this tradition have been pretty much the opposite of what many critics have asserted.

Recently I came across a remark on the concluding page of Alfred Kazin's book, *On Native Grounds*. I quote it: "It is only those who have no culture and no belief in culture who resent differences among men and the exploration of the human imagination." The naturalistic tradition, so-called, has been one means of this exploration. It can more than stand on its results if we put it to a fair test.

Avant-Garde

By HARRY ROSKOLENKO

Now they come without the motors of the war,
Errant friends, knights of ambiguous conceits,
The wards of governments, scholars of impure things,
To Paris—where they sit in gloom and are happy.

Expatriates of the plastic heart, they wear more hair,
Beards and adornments of the eye, are statuesque,
In some fallen way, radiant in rags of their astonishment,
Dwell in cafes, speak a strange language and languish.

The City of students, whores, playwrights, beggars,
More past than present, the fragile error of a war,
Becalms its quaint terrors—another crisis, another government,
With the hard coffee, the gray air, the rain.

HARRY ROSKOLENKO's work has appeared frequently in the liberal and literary reviews. He is at present in Europe.

Sandburg and "The People"

His Literary Populism Reappraised

By DAN G. HOFFMAN

THE HARDEST PART of being a pioneer is remaining a contemporary," Morton D. Zabel wrote of Sandburg in 1936. It has been Sandburg's misfortune to see his own reputation decline during the dozen years since his most successful poetry was published. Rising to fame in the excitement of the "Little Renaissance," he continued during the '20's and '30's to be popular among readers who take their poetry seriously. When the lyricism of Aiken, Cummings and Millay set the boom decade to music, Carl Sandburg described deserted city brickyards where "Fluxions of yellow and dusk on the waters / Make a wide dreaming pansy of an old pond in the night." When the depression gave poetry of social protest its short-lived hour, Sandburg found his fame greater than it had ever been. He had been protesting for twenty years; the old lines in "Hog butcher for the world" sounded still fresh, while those of Masters and Lindsay, his fellow-rebels of the "Little Renaissance," seemed naive and quaintly dated. From the beginning an accurate observer of the urban scene, Sandburg had made city life the surface as well as the subject of his poetry. His was a realistic voice which caught the cacaphonous choruses of "the mob—the crowd—the mass" and made a new poetry, in a new form, from the jangling noises about our ears.

Sandburg has a following still, but it no longer numbers many of modern poetry's serious readers. The loose, proselike surface, the flat, colloquial diction, and the apparent lack of organization and of intensity in his verse have alienated those who see Eliot, Pound, and Wallace Stevens as the chief poetic spokesmen of the contemporary dilemma. "The age demanded an image / Of its accelerated grimace," Pound told us when the age had scarcely begun; within a few short years Sandburg's image for the age seemed singularly inappropriate. He had made an ab-

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This essay is part of a longer study, *Paul Bunyan, Last of the Frontier Demigods,* which was awarded the Chicago Folklore Society Prize for 1949. DAN HOFFMAN is instructor in English at Rutgers University.

straction of "the people," and his poetry was to represent communal, rather than individual, emotion. This program of literary populism denied the poet access to the dark night of the soul, which must ever be an individual experience. It also limited the range of his language, as well as of his emotions, to the popular, the communal, and only too often, the common. Yet these limitations are exactly the sources of Sandburg's strength. In denying himself the experiences of the more introspective artist and the private diction of the individualistic poet, he became a pioneer in ways of feeling and speaking which most other poets neglect.

Nonetheless, Sandburg is now very much out of favor among the *avant garde,* both as poet and as social thinker. His name is rarely seen in the advanced quarterlies; when it does come up, it is attended by little praise. When *Poetry* recently published its thirty-fifth anniversary issue, the presence of Sandburg among the contributors seemed anachronistic. Indeed, it was almost a matter for wonder, as though a man were to address a memorial service held in his own honor.

Before taking for granted the justice of Sandburg's present eclipse it may be worth while to look into the reasons for his decline. Is the descent of his reputation caused solely by the New Critics' preference for intensity, form, and intellectualized content? Or is it possible that Sandburg has been neglected because most readers have neglected to learn how to read him? Why is it that, while everyone concedes him to be a pioneer in communal expression, so few have followed his lead with any success? Is this because his followers have imitated his faults without understanding his virtues? Or is it because the program to which he has dedicated his career as a poet is an unpromising, even an impossible, basis for art?

II

Sandburg's favorable critics approach his most successful poetry with a mixture of admiration and confusion. Willard Thorp, in the *Literary History of the United States,* writes,

> *The People, Yes* is one of the great American books. But, as has often happened in the history of our literature, its new matter required a new form, and the form is hard to name. Some of the one hundred and seven sections of the book are poems in the usual Sandburg manner, on such themes as the death of those who die for the people, or the common man as builder, wrecker, and builder again. Some sections merely assemble the collective wisdom of the people, on property, war, justice, and the law. . . .

SANDBURG AND "THE PEOPLE"

At the time *The People, Yes* appeared, Morton Zabel, in a very perceptive review in *Poetry,* wrote that

> hardly a fifth of the volume is classified by any definition as poetry, although any definition of poetry must include the purpose and imagination that runs through its pages. . . . *The People, Yes* . . . proceeds through 107 sections that alternate, on no apparent principle of contrast or structure, between personal episodes and mass movements, local anecdotes and epic generalities, lists of scenes, trades, occupations, and causes, passages of vague symbolic imagery, long catalogues of popular phrases, catchwords, clichés, and proverbs, and intervals of gnomic lyricism.

And Horace Gregory and Marya Zaturenska, in their appreciation of Sandburg in *A History of American Poetry,* dismiss his best book as a jumble in which "the kind of knowledge that can be gained by reference to the files of *The World Almanac* [was] thrown and heaped together half humorously."

Since his favorable critics have been at such a loss to understand the form of his verse, it is no surprise that his significant followers are few, though his imitators many. His casual stanzas are so difficult to reconcile with the discipline expected in traditional poetry that the critics are puzzled, and the poet attracts a kind of adulation-by-imitation from those who think that his is an easier way to spread poetry on a page.[1] This opinion is widely held, and has contributed to the decline of Sandburg's prestige.

However, there is more form in Sandburg's verse than meets the eye. I believe a careful reading of *The People, Yes* will show a definite and ingenious organization of the very lists of proverbs and catalogues of popular phrases which seemed to Mr. Zabel to reveal "no apparent principle of contrast or structure." These lists do not, as Professor Thorp suggested, "merely assemble the collective wisdom of the people." There is more to Sandburg's art than that; otherwise Mr. Gregory and Miss Zaturenska would find the files of *The World Almanac* just as satisfying as Sandburg's poems.

The most distinguished portions of *The People, Yes* are those in which the poet succeeds, or nearly succeeds, in imposing form upon his almost intractible materials. Where his scheme can be recognized, those

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[1] In the annual high school poetry contest conducted by *Scholastic* magazine, in recent years Sandburg and Whitman had by far the greatest number of young imitators. Amy Lowell and Poe were a distant third and fourth.

parts of the book assume a power they did not have before that recognition. One such portion includes Sections 36 through 47, which brings to a focus several of Sandburg's major themes. A brief analysis of Sandburg's method here will clarify his intentions for us, and help make evident the direction in which his writings have pioneered. And since his faults are interfused with his virtues, we can also see the limitations of his achievement, and the dangers inherent in making that achievement an example.

III

In this portion of *The People, Yes,* Sandburg's theme is recovery: recovery from the economic paralysis of the depression, and more immediately, recovery of human dignity from the ravages of want, hopelessness, and fear. The assertion,

> "I am zero, naught, cipher,"
> meditated the symbol preceding the numbers

introduces six verse paragraphs which argue that money brings status, pride, and selfishness. Then,

> Said the scorpions of hate: "The poor hate the rich. The rich hate the poor. The south hates the north. The west hates the east. The workers hate their bosses. The bosses hate their workers. ... We are a house divided against itself. We are millions of hands raised against each other. We are united in but one aim—getting the dollar. And when we get the dollar we employ it to get more dollars.

The capitalistic economy makes men inhuman. In the next section they wrangle over "what is mine" and "what is yours" and "who says so?" Yet along with the arguing and hating there is joking and laughter, though the humor may be wry indeed.

Sandburg describes the farmers who had overproduced their crops and cattle until they were themselves near starvation. Theirs is the smoldering hatred that verges on violence:

> "I want to shoot somebody but I don't know who.
> "We'll do something. You wait and see.
> "We don't have to stand for this skin game if we're free Americans."

Speaking through the many voices he has chosen to speak for him or to echo in his own words, Sandburg is moved to anger by the greatest of all injustices: the disavowal of human dignity, the crushing of men and of Man by the economic machine.

Have you seen men handed refusals
till they began to laugh
at the notion of ever landing a job again— . . .
Have you seen women and kids
. . . fighting other women and kids
for the leavings of fruit and vegetable markets
or searching alleys and garbage dumps for scraps? . . .
The rights of property are guarded
by ten thousand laws and fortresses.
The right of a man to live by his work—
what is this right? . . .
and why does it speak
and though put down speak out again
with strengths out of the earth?

What are these strengths out of the earth? In the next section, Number 39, two strengths are suggested. First, "They got his drift when he laughed," and second,

The strong workman whose blood goes into his work
no more dies than the people die.

These were the flags of hope for "more than one pioneer."

The theme of Section 40 is, "We live only once"; we are all played for suckers by one another, but fate in the end makes suckers out of all the players. Meanwhile,

programs, inventions,
plans, promises,
hints, insinuations pour
from the professional schemers
into the ears of the people.

But as we learn in Number 41, the people are unpredictable. You can't regulate them. Section 42 presents twenty-seven proverbs and jests which illustrate their diversity and their humor. In 43 people are compared to eggs.

What sort of an egg are you? . . .
Under the microscope Agassiz studied one egg:
chaos, flux, constellations, rainbows:
"It is a universe in miniature."

Similarly, one man is a paradigm of humanity. There follow twenty-six samples of the jokes and quips of the people. These, like the egg, are microcosms which suggest more than they seem to contain. In Section 45 these jests accumulate with growing intensity:

They have yarns
Of a skyscraper so tall they had to put hinges
On the top two stories so to let the moon go by,
Of one corncrop in Missouri when the roots
Went so deep and drew off so much water
The Mississippi riverbed that year was dry. . . .

Of the man who drove a swarm of bees across the Rocky Mountains and the Desert "and didn't lose a bee,". . .

Of the boy who climbed a cornstalk growing so fast he would have starved to death if they hadn't shot biscuits up to him, . . .

Of mosquitoes: one can kill a dog, two of them a man . . .

Of Paul Bunyan's big blue ox, Babe, measuring between the eyes forty-two ax-handles and a plug of Star tobacco exactly.

From Sandburg's long list of yarns I have abstracted those which point toward the climax of this portion a few pages later. The six motifs quoted above are all taken from the body of comic anecdotes which used to be told by lumberjacks about their hero, Paul Bunyan. Sandburg has long been familiar with this folklore; in 1924 he contributed the yarns he knew to Esther Shepherd, who used them in her popularization, *Paul Bunyan.* In their present context these fragments of the Bunyan yarns are piled helter-skelter one upon another; the list includes other folktale motifs, too, from cowboys, engineers, farmers, sailors, sheepherders, and Negro section gangs. A common bond of humor links them in their diversity. These are the incongruities the people laugh at. Sandburg brings the old yarns up to date, too, with jokes about the high-pressure salesman who sold a cop the idea of jumping off the Brooklyn Bridge; the oil man in heaven who succumbs to his own suggestion that there are gushers in hell; and four "fantasies heard at filling stations in the midwest." They are simply old tall tales mechanized:

A Dakota cousin of this Ohio man sent six years of tin can accumulations to the same works, asking them to overhaul his car. Two weeks later came a rebuilt car, five old tin cans, and a letter: "We are forwarding five parts not necessary in our new model."

And the old game of selling the bumpkin is revived by the sharpers who convince an Iowan that for twenty-five dollars they will turn the Masonic Temple on its turntable while he stands in the tower. But these later versions of old American whoppers do not displace their traditional ancestors; Rip Van Winkle, the Headless Horseman, the Flying Dutchman,

Mother Carey, and Jim Liverpool all linger in the popular imagination. So too does "Mike Fink along the Ohio and the Mississippi, half wild horse and cock-eyed alligator, the rest of him snags and snapping turtle."

Beneath the proselike surface of *The People, Yes* there is a steady quickening of the pulses of the imagination, charged and recharged with infusions of energy from one after another of these fantastic jokes and wild exaggerations. Then, for an instant, the pace is changed:

> Of the woman born deaf, blind and dumb, the vaudeville audience asked questions: . . .
> And the woman enjoyed answering these questions from people born with sight and hearing:
> "I liked it. I liked to feel the warm tide of human life pulsing round and round me."

This compassion and kinship must not be obscured by the self-assertive rantings of Mike Fink, nor forgotten in the derision of the many which comedy often directs against the single person.

But "They got his drift when he laughed." And they laugh again and again, these nameless, fameless people in *The People, Yes,* till out of their laughter an image of their own aspirations is born. The isolated jokes and yarns are clustered about a single character in whom the people see themselves:

> Who made Paul Bunyan, who gave him birth as a myth, who joked him into life as the Master Lumberjack, who fashioned him forth as an apparition easing the hours of men amid axes and trees, saws and lumber? The people, the bookless people, they made Paul and had him alive long before he got into the books for those who read. He grew up in shanties, around the hot stoves of winter, among socks and mittens drying, in the smell of tobacco smoke and the roar of laughter mocking the outside weather. And some of Paul came overseas in wooden bunks below decks in sailing vessels. And some of Paul is old as the hills, young as the alphabet.

In these twelve poems (36-47), the scraps of comic folklore have consistently grown in length and continuity from short proverbs and one-line jests to one-paragraph anecdotes, and now, in Number 47, at last to a full poem on a single subject. The increasing length is accompanied by an acceleration of intensity. "Who made Paul Bunyan" is the climax of this development, and the rhapsodic flow of its first paragraph is among the high points of Mr. Sandburg's book and of the Paul Bunyan tales in any form.

Why should Paul Bunyan emerge as the climactic image of the age in this portion of *The People, Yes*? We remember that eleven poems ago the chain of comic links that led to Paul was fastened to the dull weight of despair. The progression from "I am zero" and

> what punishment handed bottom people
> who have wronged no man's house
> or things or person?

to the ecstatic affirmation of "The people, the bookless people" is a record of the resilience of the human spirit. For Sandburg the Bunyan stories are a major triumph of the collective imagination. They fulfill in this poem the selfsame function that they played in the lives and the art of the hundreds of anonymous raconteurs who told them in the woods, when logging was a folk life which inherited directly the comic traditions of the old frontier. Constance Rourke has shown us what these functions were: the conquest of terror by laughter, of despair by comic ingenuity, and the victory of the indomitable human spirit over adversity. In Sandburg's poem the need to conquer these fears is once again the genesis of the Bunyan stories.

> The people so peculiar in renewal and comeback,
> You can't laugh off their capacity to take it

Sandburg writes in his final section. The progression culminated by "Who made Paul Bunyan" is among his most impressive demonstrations of that "renewal and comeback."

But what of the tales themselves? In the first, the Seven Axmen dance by the light of the sparks from their hobnailed boots, and "The commotion of the dancing brought on an earthquake and the Big Onion river moved over three counties to the east." In the second, Paul stops a rainstorm by climbing a waterspout and turning it off. The third retells the old yarn of the big mosquitoes whose sting killed oxen; Paul sent for bumblebees to kill them off, but the insects intermarried and their children had stingers at both ends. Next, a description of Paul's immense kitchen; finally, Benny the Little Blue Ox, who "grew two feet every time Paul looked at him."

These are all motifs which had been published previously in the popularizations of the Bunyan stories by W. B. Laughead, Ida Virginia Turney, Esther Shepherd, and James Stevens. Whether Sandburg learned them from oral sources or read them watered-down in their books, his

retelling of these motifs here lacks any distinctive flavor. Only the introductory paragraph has a truly individual tone. The flatness of his diction and the choice of anecdotes combines to defeat the poet's purpose. What was intended as a culmination of his efforts turns out an anticlimax which reveals two endemic weaknesses of Sandburg's art. One is his poetic language, the other his social thinking. A philosophy which appears so full of hope that liberal democracy will in the end prevail contains denials of those very hopes within its own statements of affirmation.

IV

It is Sandburg's personal triumph to have fashioned from the intransigent materials of these dozen poems a form which has the power to invoke our sympathies for the "bottom people," and which invites us to rejoice with them in the imaginative conquests of their hero, Paul Bunyan. But we must also ask whether it was really of moment in 1936 to assume the guise of old Paul Bunyan, so big his footsteps made earthquakes, so strong he turned off waterspouts. The natural elements were not our important enemies then. Neither does it seem especially relevant to thump the expansionist tub with hosannas of a three-mile table and an ox of fantastic size. Is not this a retreat into the vanished past? The Paul Bunyan tales are not even told any longer among the lumberjacks; how is the poet justified in resurrecting them as a symbol of the contemporary popular imagination?

Sandburg is not using Paul Bunyan narrowly to represent the loggers' hero. Accurately, he saw that these tales of Paul do convey the sense of certain aspects of our national character, and these aspects are not yet extinct simply because bulldozers have displaced ox-teams in the lumbercamps. The concepts of character which such folklore preserves from our past and presents to our future are the tenets of individualism which the pioneers needed to practice in order to survive. Paul Bunyan is the last of a long line of pioneer demigods; his ancestors are Mike Fink and Davy Crockett. Riverboating and hunting died out years ago, but logging continued well into the twentieth century as a way of life which preserved the pioneer's struggles against the hostile wilderness. Hence the yarns of the older heroes were retold about Bunyan, and so survived the passing of the old frontier.

The grip of such comic figures upon the popular imagination con-

tinues despite the changing times. The virtues of the pioneers, which the Bunyan tales and other legends keep still fresh in the public mind, derive from their heroic struggle to establish human life where for ages thunderstorms had reigned unchallenged. We admire their indomitable energy; the skills and ingenuity with which they fashioned homes in a hostile wilderness; the persistence with which they seized, held, and populated the resisting earth; and their individualism, forged in the heat of unending adversity, danger, and toil. "The people will live on," Sandburg writes; "You can't laugh off their capacity to take it."

But when civilization overtakes the rugged settlement, how useful are these same virtues? The pioneer ethic of individualism was seldom fitted to deal with interpersonal relationships on other levels than self-assertive violence. The tradition of lawlessness was so cherished on the frontier that such a man as Judge Roy Bean could be celebrated in oral tradition as a hero. Bean was that member of the bench who declared, "I am the law west of the Pecos," held court in a barroom, and said, "The jury will now deliberate; and if it brings a verdict short of hangin' it'll be declared in contempt." Paul Bunyan, too, represents Activity and Will, free from Responsibility, Conscience, or Cooperation. In many ways this frontier individualism is the very antithesis of life in a democratic civilization. While these pioneer virtues may still be admired among "the people," primitive individualism of this sort survives most vigorously in the ethic of old-style business executives, who, in the assertion of their rights of ownership, leave no ground for intelligent analysis in the solution of economic problems.

The depression was the greatest of such problems. Apparently Sandburg proposes to solve its attendant problems of poverty, hopelessness, and fear by exhorting "the people" to remember Paul Bunyan and the virtues of the pioneers. This is really cold comfort for those bottom people who find themselves at the bottom exactly because there is no longer room in America for men to emulate Paul Bunyan. Sandburg's offering is more a testament of his faith in the will of the people to survive than it is even a hint toward any constructive program. He does not suggest the application of rational intelligence in the continual effort to find an equitable balance between the rights and desires of the individual and the institutions with which he lives. In Sandburg's panoramic representation of American life, as Zabel suggests, "he is pulled by so many claims on

sympathy and forbearance that nothing survives the prodigious outlay of tolerance and compassion." Like many another native radical he has faith and good intentions, but has not penetrated to the core of those appearances which he records so faithfully. It is hard, too, to reconcile his celebration of rugged individualism with his well-known interest in the Socialist movement.

In resurrecting the dying folklore of a vanished way of life Sandburg resembles his only important literary forbear. Whitman, writing at the moment when industrialization was changing the landscape of the cities and the tempo of the people's lives, saw not the factory and lathe but the teamster, trapper, and Indian squaw. Both poets attempted to create an imaginary portrait of America. Both portrayed the expansive youth of the nation, but missed the maturer visage in which that youthfulness is interfused with other elements. In the modern struggle for survival, energy and resilience and determination—and even a sense of humor—are no longer enough. While these qualities may have helped avert the explosion of baffled anger into senseless violence in the 1930's, they alone did not restore our economy or regenerate our character. To maintain that they did so, or could do so, is a sentimental fiction, romantic but untrue.

A literature employing national myths may well be romantic, but if the romance is a fiction inadequate to the truth, then neither the myths nor the literature they inspire will be living things. Sandburg has performed a remarkable achievement in delineating our comic heritage, and suggesting its possibilities for poetry. But in his emphasis on the resilience and the energy of the people he overlooks many other strands in American culture which should be represented in the epic panorama he has attempted to write. The omission of these strands seriously weakens the validity of his achievement.

V

The aesthetic of literary populism holds that the people themselves will give language its most interesting forms and thought its most significant development. Such a belief in common speech and popular democracy as the basis for art limits the artist to one or another form of realism. He literally attempts to transcribe from nature, since the diction, structure, and content that he seeks are already expressed in the free inter-

course of the common people. Sandburg seems to follow such a program in his verse, which has always reflected his early training in journalism and his highly skilled reportorial eye.

Sandburg has an unusually accurate reportorial ear, too. There is an authenticity about his slang, his yarns, his folklore, that marks him as an accurate historian of the popular imagination. He has chosen to give us his record of that imagination in the words and inflections of the many men who created its original documents. It is often said that his language is unpoetic; yet who more than Sandburg writes in the spirit of the *Lyrical Ballads?* The language that men actually use, heightened under tension by the faculty of the imagination, is the idiom which he sought in the streets, factories, and farms—the only places where that language may actually be found.

However, he suffers from the same faults which afflicted Wordsworth, and to the degree that Sandburg follows Wordsworth's program further, so is he penalized the more. It is by now clearly evident that the most promising language for poetry is that of the uncommon, rather than the common, man. The variety of common speech which Wordsworth and Coleridge sought was itself uncommon, the supercharging under emotional stress of a limited vocabulary. The result was common words in unusual juxtapositions which suggested thoughts that no amount of aristocratic diction could inspire, unless a similar intensity had produced a similar effect.

The attempt to simplify the diction of poetry is characteristic of the major poets of our time. Eliot, Yeats, and Frost, each in his own fashion, have sought to reinvigorate poetic language by overthrowing the sweet and stuffy vocabularies of the Victorians. Sandburg, too, went to the limit of his premises in his attempt to make the language of poetry come alive. But standing on Chicago street corners to set down verbatim the wry jokes from Skid Row rewarded him more often with urbanality than with the words of power we may presume he sought. Again and again the excitement of Sandburg's concepts dissipates in their conception; the language does not project the intensity of the idea.

From the looseness of his diction it is evident that Sandburg has an unusual notion of the poet's role in producing poetry. Unlike Whitman, from whom his style is usually thought to be derived, Sandburg does not attempt to achieve in the very texture of his language organic forms

arising from the tensions of the ideas his images suggest. Whitman's most successful idiom was fresh because he had assimilated many new influences into the language of his poems. The rhythms of the sea, the solemnity of the King James Bible, the incremental repetitions of Biblical verse and nineteenth-century oratory, and the "barbaric yawp" of the backwoods boaster were combined to fashion a new poetic diction. This combination was an act of discipline as well as of the inexplicable processes of creation; it was an operation of intelligence and will, which in time produced an idiom that was the natural expression of the poet's sensibility.

The laxity of Sandburg's style shows that he has not subjected himself to a discipline as forceful as Whitman's. Instead, he strongly relies upon his raw material to suggest or supply the finished forms of his verse. Though he resembles other poets in his colloquial diction and his disregard of traditional forms, it is precisely in these departments that he is most at odds with the main trends in contemporary verse. We may say that "Easter, 1916," "Burnt Norton," "The Death of the Hired Man," and "Who made Paul Bunyan" all show a trend away from rhetoric; but Yeats, Eliot, and Frost also show a command of rhythm in the line, tension in the stanza, and compression in language that Sandburg almost never achieves. The ultimate distinction between poetic and prosaic diction is one of intensity. It is here that Sandburg fails. While his craftsmanship is considerable in many other respects, his efforts are denied a power which might be theirs but for his almost complacent reliance upon popular joke and proverb to furnish him finished language to be juggled into poems.

VI

It may well be that what Carl Sandburg attempts to do is not a promising possibility for art. He has tried to record the emotions of a society instead of an individual. His greatest weakness is not even the sagging diction of his stanzas, but the simple fact that "the people" is and remains a faceless abstraction, just as in the people's folklore Paul Bunyan is an abstraction, rather than a personification, of size, strength, cunning, and prowess. In limiting the range of his own sensibilities to experiences which are widely shared the poet of communal emotions cuts himself off from his own deepest resources. He is also likely to underestimate—

and even patronize—"the people." No writer has ever portrayed or manipulated communal emotions with the power and assurance of Shakespeare, that relentless prober of the individual soul. Except in patches, Sandburg's work is undramatic, unconcerned with the portrayal or development of character. His "people" are a hive of bees who hum snatches of human speech.

Perhaps Sandburg's major purpose was doomed from the start. In a culture as pre-eminently noncollective as ours, the poet who presents collective emotions divorced from the individual consciousness may have set himself an impossible task. He has explored a peninsula of poetry isolated from the heartland of contemporary writing. MacLeish and Stephen V. Benet have skirted his shores. John Dos Passos made poetic prose in the wake of his prosaic poems; *U.S.A.* is perhaps the only book whose plan at all resembles that of *The People, Yes.* But Carl Sandburg is a lonely figure in modern literature, a pioneer whom few have followed.

And yet *The People, Yes* has an impact, an individual stamp. It demands recognition and refuses to be forgotten. Different as it is from all other poetry produced in our time, unsuccessful as it is when judged by the standards which all other poetry demands, it billows with an imagination widely informed and widely curious which gives it a life within itself. Though its over-all structure fails to sustain it as a single poem, its parts seem more important than the whole. They are the authentic records of a single imagination the popular imagination deeply stirred. Perhaps Carl Sandburg's brighter day is yet to come, when younger writers will find in his virtues a touchstone to the development of their own. Some of them may temper his wide-ranging consciousness with their own introspection, with an intensity and a formal discipline he has failed to achieve. But surely he has much to teach them of the imaginative possession of the American past, as well as of the sensitive observation of the American scene today.

Disappearing Dialect

By ROSE ALTIZER BRAY

FROM RADIO COMEDIES and funny papers millions of persons form their conceptions of people in other sections of the country. The grande dame of Boston, the tight-fisted down-Easterner, the drawling cowboy, the flibbertigibbet Southern belle, and the feuding mountaineer are stock characters on both the air and the printed page. Few people stop to think that they are only caricatures, with regional peculiarities loud-pedaled, so that, to quote Funk and Wagnalls, the picture is "marked by ridiculous exaggeration or distortion."

The Appalachian hillbilly in particular has lost face through these mediums. In the mountains as everywhere else, there are all sorts of people, good and bad, intelligent and stupid, well-to-do and poverty-stricken, with all the gradations between. The only particular in which mountaineers once differed from the rest of the country was that they were old-fashioned. And now that better roads and schools, automobiles, radios, and electricity are common there as elsewhere, most of them have learned and adopted modern ways. Even in their speech, they are fast approaching the norm.

But among the older people and in the few remaining backwoods sections, the oldtime idioms and pronunciations may still be heard. It is well known that the "song-ballads" of the hills are survivals of Elizabethan ditties brought to America by the early settlers. Less well known except among philologists is the fact that the mountaineer of a generation or so ago spoke in most respects as did the British people of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, during which the new world was colonized. He was not ignorant. He was just an anachronism. And this fact may be proved by comparing his speech with the language of writers of Queen Elizabeth's and Chaucer's times. What seem to be his grammatical errors may be shown to have been the correct idioms of the time when he retired into his mountain fastness.

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Take, for example, a sentence such as this: "I never done no such a thing." We may pass over the use of "never" meaning positively not, which, although rare, is still not obsolete, and consider "done" used as the past tense. English verbs during medieval times, and even during the Tudor and Stuart reigns, were in a state of transition. "Ben," "seon," "tacan," "don," "feallan" (fallen) were Anglo-Saxon infinitive and present tense forms, but ultimately they became past participles. The verbs meanwhile underwent many changes of both form and usage. Chaucer wrote in the fourteenth century, "Ye ben to me right welcome," signifying the present. In the fifteenth-century ballad, "A Gest of Robyn Hode," is this sentence: "My welthe is went away." Shakespeare wrote in *King Lear,* "Thou hast fell," and "Thy soldiers have took their discharge." "I been" and "have went," "I seen," "I taken" and "I done it," often used by mountain people, are survivals of this time of flux in verb forms.

Verbs in the following quotations have a familiar ring to those who know mountain speech: "The boteler shet fast the dore." "The abbot ete no more." "He holpe me out of tene [trouble]." These are from "A Gest of Robyn Hode." "He holp the heavens to rain" is found in *King Lear.* "Sure, he rid in fear or for a wager" is from *A Woman Killed with Kindness* by Heywood. "I am catched" occurs in Ben Jonson's *The Alchemist.*

Still other forms common to the mountains and the classics are "heared" for heard, "et" for ate, "mought" for might, "durst" or "darst" for dare, "crope" for crept, "allow," "lay off," "aim," or "go to" (as in "I didn't go to do it") for intend, "drawed" and "growed" for drew and grew, "stoled" for stole, "come" for came, "dreamt" for dreamed, "smelt" for smelled, and "clumb" for climbed. Sir Walter Scott spelled this "clomb." "Fetch" is not obsolete, but it is rare in modern speech. So is "fault" as a verb, meaning criticize or blame. All these may be found in writings of educated people of Shakespeare's time or earlier.

Another hangover in verb forms is the participle with "a-" prefixed, as "He slapped her a-windin'." This extra syllable was probably originally used as an intensive, say the philologists. The title of the old round, "Sumer Is I-cumen In," is an ancient example of its use. In Marlowe's play, *Edward II* (circa 1590), is the sentence: "My Lord of Cromwell is a-coming over." The King James version of the Bible (1611) contains in I Peter 3:20: "While the ark was a-preparing." And a Mother Goose

rhyme of about 1729 runs: " 'I'm going a-milking, sir,' she said." Of similar construction is "afeared" (afraid), found frequently in the classics as well as heard in the mountains, and the Scriptural "an-hungered."

As for the habit common all over the South of omitting final "g's" from participles, "i-cumen" in the title just mentioned gives the sanction of antiquity to that. In the ballad "Barbara Allan," the rhymes with Allan—or sometimes the words in assonance—are always participles: falling, spilling, dwelling, and so on. It may be deduced that the "g" was customarily omitted. For almost a hundred and fifty years after the Jamestown settlement in Virginia, the present participle in England still ended in "in" or "en." In the mother country, people began to add the final "g" about the middle of the eighteenth century, but far from stylish London, the colonists went on using the old form. And their descendants are still using it.

"Preach" and "reach" once had the past tenses "praught" and "raught." "Taught" is still the past tense of teach, of course, and in the hills the other two are sometimes heard. An old joke of the changing era in the mountains ran: "When people used to come from church they was asked: 'Did you have any preachin'? Who praught?' But nowadays folks asks: 'Did you have any fightin'? Who fit?' "

Learn for teach was once used everywhere. In Ben Jonson's play, *Volpone,* is this example: "Since thou knowest not how to live well here, thou shalt be learn'd to die well."

There was little agreement in number between subjects and predicates in Elizabethan days. Nor was there in the mountains until recent times. "Fritters and pancakes comes trowling in wheelbarrows" occurs in *The Shoemaker's Holiday* by Dekker, and "You was my brother's tenant" in *A Woman Killed With Kindness.* "You was" is the usual form in the hills. It's logical enough when talking to one person.

The double negative once moved in good company, too. "I do not like this fellow by no means," wrote Heywood, the dramatist. And Ben Jonson wrote: "Stay! That he must not by no means," and "Never no imitator ever grew up to his author." Such sentences as these which may be heard in the Appalachians, "I never done no such thing," and "You're not in no hurry, are ye?" were quite proper in their day.

The double subject may likewise be defended. "Brother, he come home," the highlander may say, or "That teacher, she says the outland-

ishest things." But in *A Woman Killed With Kindness* is the sentence: "Your sister, she hath to her dower your mother's modesty," and in *King Lear*: "Our father, he hath writ of differences."

"Hit" for "it" was used by Queen Elizabeth in her letters. It was then a proper form of the pronoun. Mountain people use it particularly as the initial word in a sentence, as "Hit's the pure truth." They often pronounce you as "ye," an archaic form which needs no specific example. This pronunciation is more apt to occur in a question: "Did ye?" or as an objective: "I love ye so good."

Certain hill-country contractions sound strange to alien ears, as "young'uns" (young ones), "you'uns" (you ones), "nary" (ne'er a), "ary" (e'er a), "t'other" (the other), "hain't" (have not), "his'n," "her'n," "your'n," "their'n" (his own, et cetera), and "a'body" (anybody), used as modern people use the indefinite pronoun "one." "Art thou acquainted with never a farthingale maker?" wrote Thomas Dekker in *The Shoemaker's Holiday*. "I'll not be made a prey unto the marshall for ne'er a snarling dogbolt [contemptible person] o' you both," comes from the *Alchemist,* as well as the following: "Here comes t'other rare man."

Southerners in general may stop feeling guilty about using "you all." No less a person than Christopher Marlowe used it in *Edward II* in the same way in which Southerners use it, to address more than one person: "We thank you all."

Common to all Virginians is the use of "it" as an indefinite introductory pronoun in such sentences as "It's a circus in town." *Edward II* also contains a parallel of this usage: "It is no dealing with him now."

Certain neuter nouns are uninflected in all parts of Virginia and in many other sections of the country just as they were in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in England. Rural Southerners frequently speak of two team of horses, two yoke of oxen, a distance of four mile, a period of several year, or a height of nine foot. "This seven yere" is found in "A Gest of Robyn Hode." "Five thousand pound" occurs in *Edward II.*

Some prepositions retain ancient meanings in the speech of mountaineers. "Wash the dishes till I sweep the floor," means while I sweep. "He goes to church of a Sunday morning," means on Sunday morning, with a connotation of regularity. "I am helping of him," "he was deceiving of her," illustrate another ancient use of this preposition. "I am building of a new shop," and "he falls to picking of his pockets," are

examples from Ben Jonson's *The Alchemist*. In mountain parlance, "It will happen ag'in' I go" means before I go. "I mean, against the appointed day, to visit all my friends" is found in *The Knight of The Burning Pestle* by Beaumont and Fletcher. "Shut the door to" is a mountain expression which is a literal translation from the German language, brought to the Appalachians by the Pennsylvania-Dutch (really Germans), who formed a considerable number of the early settlers of the region.

Another literal German translation is used in such questions as "What for a dress did she have on?" and "What for a time did you have at the party?" "Was fur ein" is used in exactly the same construction in German speech. The mountaineers like to use "now" at the ends of sentences to give emphasis as: "I certainly did, now!" "I don't believe it, now!" And "I'll give a dollar, yet," means an additional dollar. Both these particles are of German origin as to usage. "Oncet" and "twicet" also show the German influence.

Many words and phrases are used in the hills in senses now obsolete in the rest of the world. "Generation" means a racial or family stock, not a period of time. The Bible uses it in the same sense: "O generation of vipers." A young man may be said to be "waiting on" the girl he is wooing. "Wait on the Lord," which occurs in Proverbs 20:22 and elsewhere in the scriptures, has the same meaning, that is, to give loving attention. To "make an admiration" is to express wonder. In *Hamlet* is a sentence illustrating this old meaning: "Season your admiration for a while." A "fraction" in the hills is a quarrel or a breakup in friendly relations. The word, from the Latin "fractus," broken, is thus used in its original sense. A clever man in the Appalachians is a kindly man. "Stout" means in good health. "Aggravate" is used for annoy.

To "pack" is to carry, a lingual relic of the day when settlers moved into the mountains carrying their goods on pack-horses. "Sorry" denotes inferior, as "sorry apples," or "He made a sorry out" (a poor performance). "Thou hast been a sori husband (husbandman)" is a Medieval English example from "A Gest of Robyn Hode." "Her man" as a synonym of "her husband" is often used by mountaineers. "Heap," meaning much or many, is used all over Virginia, just as Chaucer uses it in his *Prologue to the Canterbury Tales"*: "The wisdom of an heep of learned men."

"Gaum" and "dauncy" are two picturesque colloquialisms dating

from the fifteenth century. An old man who disliked icing on his cake said he'd rather not have it all gaumed up," that is, made sticky. Sometimes the word denotes soiled, also. "Dauncy" means halfway ill, or dainty of appetite. A poke is a small bag. "Don't buy a pig in a poke," runs an ancient proverb. "Traipse" means to walk or travel about, often with a suggestion of contempt.

Peculiarities of pronunciation in the hills, as well as the vocabulary, may be shown to be of ancient origin. "Git" was derived from the Anglo-Saxon "gitan," while "get" came into the English language later from the Scandinavian. "Yit" for yet is often heard, too, and in "A Gest of Robyn Hode" is found: "That ever yit saw me." "Poor" is spelled "pore" in the same ballad, just as mountaineers pronounce it. "Yore" for "your" follows the Anglo-Saxon spelling of "eower." "Kyore" and "pyore" and "shore" (cure, pure and sure) are pronounced thus by analogy.

In Sussex County, England, may still be heard the old pronunciation of long "i" for "oi" spellings, as "spile" for spoil. Such pronunciation survives in the Appalachians also. Poison is "pizen," pennyroyal is "pennyryal," a house has "jists," a tune is "histed," grandfather is stiff in the "jints" and "anints" them with "intment," the kettle "biles," the kitten "quiles" (coils) up on the hearth. Kerosene is lamp "ile," one "jines" the church and is "appinted" an elder. Old documents prove that this pronunciation has been continuous. "A Gest of Robyn Hode" contains: "For all his ryall fare." Thomas Gray (1716-1771) in his "Elegy in A Country Churchyard" rhymed "toil" and "smile." Isaac Watts (1674-1748) rhymed "rise" with "joys." In the anonymous sixteenth-century poem, "Jolly Good Old Ale," "strye" is used for "destroy." Another anonymous poem entitled "Taxation of America" contains this stanza:

> Surely we were your betters,
> Hard by the Brandywine.
> We laid him fast in fetters
> Whose name it was Burgoyne. (Burgine)

Two lists of men who served in the Revolutionary War bear the name of Royal Thompson. On one of the lists, it is spelled "Ryal" Thompson.

The English broad "a" survives in such mountain pronunciations as "volentine' for valentine, "wropped" for wrapped, and corn "tossel" for tassel. A harrow is called a "horrow" and narrow is pronounced "nor-

row" as in the old ballad, Barbara Allan:

"O mother, mother, make my bed!
O make it soft and norrow!
Since my love died for me today,
I'll die for him tomorrow."

A forward girl is said in the hills to be "forred." Sometimes everything goes "back'ards." One goes "som'ers" (somwhere), and "al'ays" performs a hard task by main force and "awk'ardness." The surnames Tugwell, Boswell, and Burwell often occur side by side in colonial records with the forms "Tuggle," "Bosell" and "Burrell," for people spelled largely by sound in the early days of our country, when schools were few and costly. Lum Ed'ards, the radio favorite, has the authority of old-time usage for his pronunciation of his surname. The Ozarks were settled largely by people from the Appalachians who were of English stock. Such contractions date from seventeenth-century British speech.

Still used in England are the pronunciations "stujo" and "tremenjus" for studio and tremendous. An old-time mountaineer may tell stories which are "tejus" (tedious) to his grandchildren, of his great-grandpappy's prowess against the "Injuns."

He accents "towards" on the last syllable as in the days when Ben Jonson wrote in *Volpone*: "Now look towards the windore—if thou dost—" and in *The Alchemist*: "And make 'em haste towards their gulling more." Ben Jonson's meter is smooth, and the accent of the word may be deduced by scanning the lines quoted.

"Drain" is called "dreen" in the hills, as well as in other isolated sections of the country. The Anglo-Saxon verb was drehnigean, drenian.

"I was a'most lost" from *Volpone* is an old example of the pronunciation of "almost" heard in the Appalachians. A very old lady remarked: "I was e'en-a'most sick." Yeast is called "east." A similar example is found in *Edward II:* "My heart with pity earns [yearns]." Conversely, ears are often called "years" in the South. William Strachey in his *Historie of Travaile into Virginia Britania* spelled herbs as "yearbs." "Yarb doctors" may still be found in remote parts of the South.

"Whaur" for where, "wush" for wish, "sich" for such, and "drap" for drop are Scotch contributions to the language of the highlands. The Scotch-Irish formed another large group of early settlers there.

Itches is pronounced "eaches." A parallel from the past is the old

jingle: "Cream and peaches, my nose itches." "Feesh" for fish is occasionally heard, though this is more common in similarly isolated sections along the coast. This obsoletism may be traced to Medieval England, when long "i" was sounded as in the word "machine."

The mountain pronunciation of are is "air." Its former use is illustrated by the rhyming of "care" and "are" in the Methodist hymn called "Dennis" by Philip Doddridge (1702-1751). Charles Wesley of the same period rhymed "repair" with "are" in the hymn "Boylston."

"Passel" is used for parcel, and occasionally forward is called "fairward" and parboil "pairbile," though these are more often heard further east. "Clare till yet" means clear up to the present time. Other words which in modern usage have the "air" sound are given the old-time broad "a" sound in the Appalachians. An old man was heard trying to frighten his grandson into good behavior with the warning: "Don't go thar. Thar's a bar in thar." Proof that this is the old pronunciation of the word "bear" is furnished by the inscription which Daniel Boone carved on a tree trunk: "D. Boone cilled a bar on this in the year 1760." Much earlier, Chaucer used the word "threadbar," and Thomas Gray (1716-1771) rhymed "car" and "bear."

"Keer" and "sheer," "cheer" and "skeer" are used for care, share, chair, and scare. Several old wills of the Revolutionary period of Virginia speak of the eldest son's having already received his "sheer" of his father's land. A hymn called Irish written in 1698 rhymes "fear" and "care."

In England in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, words spelled with "er" had the sound of "ar." "Clerk" was called "clark," as it still is in England. The rest of America has adopted the "er' sound altogether, but in the hills, old-timers still speak of "sarvis" (service) berries, "varmints" (from "varmin" for vermin), "sarvants," and a man's just "desarvance." A slightly variant pronunciation is "yallow" for yellow, and "wrastle" for wrestle, though the latter word is not confined to the hills. Beaumont and Fletcher wrote in *The Knight of The Burning Pestle*: "I saw him wrastle with a great Dutchman and hurl him."

An example of the illogical way in which the English language has developed is supplied by the words "far," "for," and "foreign." "A Gest of Robyn Hode" has: "The day is not yet ferre gone." Chaucer uses the spelling "fer" and he wrote "ferne" for foreign. Probably this word was then pronounced "farne" and "fer" was called "far," as clerk was "clark."

But the mountaineer now pronounces these words "fer" and "ferrin" though the modern spelling is "ar" or the equivalent. A nonsensical wisecrack is given in the hills in answer to the question "What fer?": "Cat fur to make kitten breeches."

"Hunderd," "brethern," and "childern" are highland survivals of pronunciations used by the best English speakers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. "Apern" and "iern" (apron and iron) have remained in general speech, but the others are now archaisms. "Deef" for deaf has the authority of Chaucer's use: "A good wyf was there of bisyde Bathe, but she was som-del [somewhat] deef and that was scathe [a pity]."

The Appalachian regions abound in picturesque idioms. The antiquity of some can be proved, that of others surmised.

To be "beholden" means to be obligated, as in *The Knight of The Burning Pestle*: "Ralph shall not be beholding to him." In the same play, "honey" as a term of endearment is used, a form of address common to the entire South. To "make haste" (pronounced "make 'aste") is to hurry. In *Volpone* is an old example: "I desire your worship to make haste." In the mountains, as all over the South, a girl is "right" pretty, a distance may be a "right fer piece," soup may be "a right smart hot." In "A Gest of Robyn Hode" occurs this example: "Yonder I saw a right fayre harte," and numerous other examples of "right" in the sense of very are scattered throughout literature of the time.

In all of Virginia, "I'll come directly" means "after a little while," not immediately. "Mighty pretty," "mighty sad," "mighty nice" are frequently heard. "Yes, siree!" is more emphatic than a simple "Yes, sir." Perhaps "siree" is a corruption of the word "sirrah."

"Well-doin' " is hill vernacular for prosperous. "Don't be so toucheous" means don't be quick on the uptake. "The mosquitos are eating me up bodaceously" means bodily. "Shivaree" is the mountain equivalent of charivari, a serenade to a newly married couple. The word is used both as noun and verb.

In *The Shoemaker's Holiday* is the phrase: "This wench with the mealy mouth." "Mealy-mouthed" is still used in the mountains, meaning afraid to express opinions clearly. In *A Woman Killed With Kindness* is this expression: "There's not one amongst them that can say bo to a goose." A timid person is still described thus in the hills.

"Simmer down," a mountain parent may say to his child, meaning

"Be quiet." A person who is excessively beloved is the lover's "very eyeballs." This phrase is used twice in the play last mentioned. An expression which is still current in the Appalachians occurs in *The Shoemaker's Holiday*: "I'll take her down a buttonhole lower."

Very old people may still say on departure: "I wish you well," or "Fare you well," usually pronounced "Far you well." It is considered polite to say on leaving: "Won't you come and go along?" and the correct answer is "No, I reckon I'd better stay here." "I'll make you acquainted with Miz Brown" was the old-time form of introduction. "I'm proud to see you" expresses welcome, and an inquiry as to one's health is answered with "I'm tolerable" or "Well as common," or "I can't complain." At a laden table, the host will say deprecatingly: "We ain't got much, but you're welcome to what we got."

A ne'er-do-well is often described as "not wuth the powder and ball to blow him up." The old-time Kentucky rifles, known as "Long Toms," were loaded with powder and "ball," or homemade bullets. To "call a man out of his name" is to insult him with some epithet. To "talk short to" is to speak impatiently. An impending event is "fixing to happen." "It puts me in mind of" means "it reminds me."

Vivid figures of speech roll from the tongues of some imaginative mountaineers: "Slick as a ribbon"; "He made for home as hard as he could tear"; "He was just a-sailin' "; "He dodged like a frog in a hailstorm"; "He run like a streak"; "If that don't take the rag off the bush"; "If that don't beat the bugs a-fightin'." "Pullin' a pore mouth" means complaining overmuch. An impertinent child is "ficety," or like the small snappish dog known as a "fice." A woman's untidy hair "looks like a brush'eap." Smoke comes "bilin' out the chimbley." "No great shakes" means inferior.

Dr. Louise Pound of the University of Nebraska wrote: "One of the interesting features of American dialect speech is the wealth of ancient or historical words, now extinct in the literary language, that linger in remote regions." Few sections have preserved more such words than the Appalachian highlands. Mountain people needed the benefits which have accrued from contact with the country at large. But all good things have their price. The mountaineer has paid by surrendering a large part of his picturesque speech and customs. Hit shore seems like a pyore shame.

Books - - - -

WHAT PRICE LIBERALISM?

Social Thought in America. By Morton G. White. Viking Press, 1949. $3.50.

Liberalism has rarely been attacked frontally, in this country at least. For Americans are supposed to be "liberals" almost by definition—even Senator Taft. But liberalism is vulnerable to flanking movements, either from the left or the right. Its chief vulnerability (and this would appear to be more on the left side than on the right) seems to be a tendency to sweetness and light, impeccable but nugatory. That is to say, there is little wrong with liberalism in theory; but, it is asked, what has it to offer as a practical program? It talks but does not act. So, the challenge of "put up or shut up" has seemed a powerful one, almost unanswerable as the twentieth-century rolls on from the pragmatic 'twenties to the totalitarian 'fifties.

Professor White's book is in large measure sympathetic to pragmatic liberalism, but it does not fail to ask the followers of Dewey, Holmes, Veblen, Robinson, and Beard (the shapers of the liberal tradition in America) to put up or—at least quiet down. To "put up," in this case, means to devise a political technology which might be expected to implement the philosophy of liberalism; and even Dewey, as the author has discovered, has admitted that he himself has "done little or nothing in this direction." This challenge will be returned to presently; it is noted here to show that *Social Thought in America* is far more than a history or a eulogy. It is a book of constructive criticism and raises issues fundamental for any contemporary social philosophy.

The subtitle of Dr. White's book is "The Revolt Against Formalism," and it is this theme of protest that unites at the very start the five thinkers he has chosen to illustrate early twentieth-century liberalism. All five insisted "upon coming to grips with life, experience, process, growth, context, function." They revolted, in turn, against logical fictions such as the man of pure intellect, the legal man, the economic man, and the detached and objective historian man. They turned from abstract entities to concrete history, from mathematics to biology, from fixed principles to dynamic institutions. The author does not contend that his five men are all of a piece. On the contrary, despite a general rapport (very close in some of the cases) there were disagreements, breaks, and misunderstandings. Nor does Dr. White look with entire favor on this revolt against intellectualism: he suspects that it has left too many prejudices against the more recent formalistic movements in philosophy and social science, such as mathematical logic, logical analysis, econometrics, and so on. Nevertheless, it is clear that pragmatism, institutionalism, legal

realism, economic determinism, and the "new history" were all joined in a common suspicion of the barren neatness of intellectual classicism.

The middle sections of *Social Thought in America* are devoted to a detailed tracing of the liberal philosophies of the five, with particular attention being given to the overlapping and mutual influences to be found among them. The chapter headings are almost self-explanatory: The New History and the New Ethics (which discusses Robinson and Dewey); The Path of the Law (on Holmes); The Amoral Moralist (Veblen); Progressive Education and Progressive Law (Dewey and Holmes); High Ideals and Catchpenny Realities (Beard); and Creative Intelligence which, deriving its name from an important book edited by Dewey in 1917, gives an excellent, if somewhat critical, account of the Deweyan approach to the problem of knowledge.

This date, 1917, is important for Dr. White's exposition. His argument is that World War I brought the first great challenge to modern American liberalism. It was a philosophy designed for reasonable men (although not for logicians), for men who could see the steady growth of a creating intelligence and who could explain the deviations from that growth in terms of institutional conservatism, cultural lag, and amusing ceremonial anachronisms; it was a philosophy designed for peaceful and considered discussion, not for power politics and war. It is significant that a chapter on Destructive Intelligence follows shortly after the chapter on Creative Intelligence. Here Professor White concentrates upon the break between Randolph Bourne and John Dewey over pacifism. Followers of Dewey like Bourne and Jane Addams confidently expected him to attack any use of force and to rest the case for peace on the self-correcting and nonviolent use of human intelligence. Dewey did not. There is no need here to enter into the details of that dispute. Dr. White is on firm — and easy — ground when he shows the embarrassment into which war forces philosophy. The international road followed not only by Dewey, but by Bertrand Russell and many others, made many windings and even full circles as it meandered by the mile-posts of 1914, 1918, 1937, 1939, 1941, 1946. Although the author leaves us in almost complete doubt as to his own attitude in such crises for liberalism, he is unchallengeable when he points to the dilemma facing the liberal philosopher when he confronts power and war.

Then came the lush 'twenties. Professor White opens his chapter on this period with a few interesting dates showing how some of The Five's greatest books are mixed up with Coué, Mah Jong, "Yes, We Have No Bananas," cross-word puzzles, Harding and Coolidge. And he points out how, along with others, his liberal thinkers became sardonic and patronizing in those pre-aspirin days leading up to 1929. But what reason had they for feeling superior and aloof? Robinson represented the opinions of all of them when he said that he had "no

reforms to recommend, except the liberation of intelligence, which is the first and most essential one," and that "what we need first is a change of heart and a chastened mood which will permit an ever-increasing number of people to see things as they are, in the light of what they have been and what they might be." This, thinks Dr. White, is little different from the banalities of Warren G. Harding on international relations. And when liberals did make specific recommendations, as in Veblen's *The Engineers and the Price System,* they admitted that conditions were not yet ready for them. "This was the story of liberal political philosophy in the 'twenties. It was unwilling to be too specific out of a fear of rigidity, and yet when it became specific it proposed admittedly utopian measures." This is a clear statement of the thesis of most of *Social Thought in America.*

The book, of course, is not simply concerned with what happened before 1930. The challenge it presents is, above all, a contemporary one, and it cannot be ignored. To come to that challenge, I pass over the author's serious criticism of Dewey's attempt to approach ethics scientifically. It is largely a technical matter, and since Dr. White professes not to be criticizing naturalism in general but simply Dewey's version of it, the issue need not be joined.

It was around 1930 that the Golden Age of American Liberalism came to an end. Not a complete or total end, of course, because the leaders of the "Roosevelt Revolution" looked back to this age and to its five great leaders for guidance and inspiration. (This Dr. White recognizes but doesn't elaborate.) But as the futile 'forties end and the fatal 'fifties come on so portentously, "liberalism"—even when it is avowed—seems to be honored rather than followed, talked about instead of spelled out; and in many places it is far from being avowed. "These are days in which Dewey's views are being replaced by Kierkegaard's in places where once Dewey was king; when Robinson is dismissed as a pleasant popularizer; when Keynes comes in triumph over Veblen; when Beard's work is divided into 'periods' so that his later views can be consistently anathematized by those who once made him a hero." If he had wished, Dr. White could have added many other examples, examples much more depressing because they would have been symptomatic, not merely of the decline of a philosophy, but of the whole dreary loss of contemporary nerve.

The author of this book leaves no doubt in the reader's mind that he values highly the contributions of his five liberals to social thought in America. Statements like these are frequent and typical: "American social thought has yet to reveal any cohesive successor to the school we have examined, but, if it comes, that successor will do well to preserve the virtues of the older group." "The question today is whether we can salvage more than a temper in Beard, Dewey, Holmes, Robinson, and Veblen; but to salvage even their temper would help, for it

was a good and humane temper; it was honest, courageous, rational, and enlightened." "Above all, they communicated a respect for freedom and social responsibility which has all but disappeared from the earth." But he is far from satisfied. For one thing (and there is more than a little impertinence here), he dislikes "their fuzziness and their lack of logic." Perhaps of more importance is his feeling that although necessary, liberalism is not sufficient; something more must be added. And the very least that must be added is that liberalism "should issue in a social engineering, in an applied science of political education—and not merely in the hope that someday we may develop one. . . . One might have hoped that . . . Dewey would stimulate students and disciples to build this technology, but where are they?"

A short review like this is hardly the place to answer Professor White's questions. (And since this book is to be followed by another, perhaps his questions are rhetorical.) But because the editors of this magazine have been aiming for almost ten years toward "an adequate social philosophy" (these are the concluding words of the book), one suggestion at least may be ventured. It probably would be unfair to prod the author on his use of the word "adequate"—e.g., adequate for what, adequate for whom, adequate in what context, and so on. But since Professor White finds fault with John Dewey for his alleged insensitivity to logical analysis (the assumption being that Dr. White *is* sensitive), he could not very well complain. However, I certainly don't intend to be carping, especially since I believe that the quotation used above may contain a partial criterion for adequacy. "Above all," writes Dr. White, the liberals "communicated a respect for freedom and social responsibility which has all but disappeared from the earth." This is more than simply a casual pat on the back.

The political technology and social engineering asked for by the impatient ones are worthless without the orientation of "freedom and social responsibility." Almost anyone can supply *ad hoc* political gadgetry—Nazis and Communists being as successful as any. If the serious critic of "liberalism" regards as decisive Dewey's "confession" that he himself has done little or nothing to devise a political technology, the critic falls into precisely the same trap he has ordinarily baited for the pragmatist—the trap designed to confuse ends and means. But one can't have it both ways! Has the pragmatic liberal been too much concerned with means, or not enough?

I don't underestimate the challenge put to the traditional American liberal. But I think the challenge can be met only if the underlying philosophy of liberalism remains unobscured. More than that—only if it be made electric and incandescent. This underlying philosophy is admittedly an attitude, a temper of mind; it is nothing else but that "respect for freedom and social responsibility" which Dr. White recognizes as crucial. With that way of thinking secured, a great deal of

leeway can be given to political machinery. Blueprints for such machinery are not unavailable. In the last issue of the *Review* Jim Cork suggested one device — that of supplementing Dewey's liberalism with the specific program of democratic socialism as illustrated, say, by the British Labor Party. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., has given a more native twist to largely the same idea in his concept of "the vital center." And, as Professor White himself points out, the New Deal and its successors have drawn their inspiration from the shapers of American liberalism — as well as from Keynes. A social technology is imperative, but only when provision has been made for the center to hold. That is why the American liberal has always placed such a high priority on civil liberties and constitutionalism, and why he has differed sharply from the traditional Continental leftist, who so often has rushed into programs without first securing his base of operations — a fierce respect for the individual.

Dr. White promises us another book. When it arrives, perhaps he will be less dubious about the long-run power of American liberalism. That liberalism has never been totally eclipsed, although it has been hidden at times by deep clouds, none more opaque than those blown about by the "totalitarian liberal" hypnotized, for too long a time, by the Soviet Union. After its partial obscurity the liberal sun may seem brighter. Whether it does or not, there is no other light. And any political machinery built without it will rise in a murky totalitarian gloom.

GEORGE R. GEIGER

RUSSIA AND THE SOVIET STATE

Political Power in the U.S.S.R., 1917-1947. By Julian Towster. Oxford, 1948. $6.

The Foreign Policy of Soviet Russia, 1929-1941. By Max Beloff. Oxford, Vol. 1, 1947; Vol. II, 1949. $4.25 and $5.

The People of Great Russia, A Psychological Study. By Geoffrey Gorer and John Rickman, M.D. Cresset Press, 1949. 10s.6d.

My Three Years in Moscow. By Lt. Gen. Walter Bedell Smith. Lippincott, 1950. $3.75.

Roosevelt and the Russians, The Story of the Yalta Conference. By Edward R. Stettinius, Jr.; edited by Walter Johnson. Doubleday, 1949. $4.

The United States and the Soviet Union; Some Quaker Proposals for Peace. Prepared for the American Friends Service Committee by its Working Party on American-Soviet Relations, headed by President Gilbert F. White, Haverford College. Yale, 1949. $1.

The Government of the Soviet Union, 2nd ed. By Samuel N. Harper and Ronald Thompson. Van Nostrand, 1949. $5.

Hanson W. Baldwin, the thoughtful, nonbilious military editor of the *New York Times*, has said that America's major wartime errors were all part and parcel of our political immaturity, but that "they were ferti-

lized, too, by a lack of knowledge or lack of adequate interpretation of that knowledge." He added—our italics—that *"this was particularly true of our wartime relationship with Russia."* This view of our wartime policy makes one question particularly pertinent: to what extent has current American understanding of Soviet politics matured? How well has the West kept step with the problems created daily by international tension?

Since the end of World War II, there has been a considerable change in the tone and quality of Western studies of Soviet society. In large measure, the scanty Soviet travelogues and rose-colored scholarship of the 1930's and the war years have given way to a more sober and competent genre. It is indicative that of the current books touched upon in this survey, practically each one represents the most superior up-to-date treatment of its subject.

Yet if the Soviet state's somber and peculiar features have been percolating gradually into the consciousness of its Western students, a sizable number of shortcomings, pitfalls, and fallacies continue to jeopardize its proper understanding. That this should occur on a topic as immensely complicated, "unscientific," and emotionalized as Soviet Communism is only to be expected. There can be no certainty, moreover, that a satisfactory answer regarding the true nature of the Soviet state will be evolved until the outside world is equipped with far more perspective and information on the USSR than it possesses today.

Nevertheless, greater effort needs be made to exact a higher standard from studies on Sovietism. Of those to be covered, the first three concern problems of research, the next three deal with Soviet foreign policy, the next two with Soviet public opinion, and the last with what may be called the rationale of the Soviet state.

One of the banes of American scholarship in general is the uncritical loyalty to documentation of all findings by "primary sources," frequently meaning only official ones. Even when dealing with a society like the American, where the veracity of official statements are ever subject to challenge by outside experts and laymen, such a reliance solely on official sources is apt to lead to a grotesque misrepresentation of reality. And yet Western studies of present-day Russia—where no such internal independent verification is feasible—have done just that. (No better, of course, is the other extreme—neglect of Soviet sources—as exemplified by Max Beloff's massive two-volume *Foreign Policy of Soviet Russia (1929-1941.)*

The most notable recent illustration of the practice of relying on Soviet sources is Julian Towster's *Political Power in the U.S.S.R., 1917-1947.* Although—or because?—this study is studded with references exclusively to official Soviet data, both the lay book reviewers and the scholars have been dazzled by its "singular objectivity of attitude" (in the words of Professor Quincy Wright).

As is often the case with such books, *Political Power in the U.S.S.R.* does not merely reflect Soviet views, and some of it is quite valuable. But it

does not explain the Soviet state and its use of political power, as its title promises; the book's reliance on Soviet sources has inevitably produced a picture reflecting a government's picture of itself—as well as an omission of material on negative features of Sovietism. Thus in a book dealing with "political power," the ubiquitous role of repressive organs and methods is hardly even alluded to.

Another pitfall in American scholarship in general and of Soviet studies in particular is the mechanistic projection of terminology, theories, and other premises based on Western experience. In many ways this is a natural and hardly avoidable failing. But it is a key obstacle when dealing with a subject like the Soviet state. The USSR's uniqueness and still not perceived institutional innovations are in reality probably far more important than the apparent similarities and historical connections.

The essentially rationalistic reliance upon Western experience for analyses of the Soviet state is in one way or another a feature—and therefore a drawback—of practically every book touched upon in this survey. In particular is it true of Towster's study. A political scientist, Towster creates even in the book's most sound and realistic passages an unmistakable impression that, whatever the deviations, the Soviet state can well be described by theories and terms applied to Western governments. This almost exclusive emphasis on formal and constitutional structure, while it may resemble the institutions of the West, certainly mocks those of Soviet society.

Injudicious projection of Western theories is exacerbated when it is confined to only one of the narrow academic "disciplines" currently in fashion. A most extreme—and self-admitted—instance of this is provided by Geoffrey Gorer, the British anthropologist, in *The People of Great Russia:*

> The fact that I do not discuss, except incidentally, such subjects as [the Great Russians'] history, their economics, their contemporary social and political organization and the like should not be interpreted to mean that I do not consider these subjects to be of the greatest importance for a complete picture. I do not discuss them because I do not feel myself competent to discuss them. . . .

The modesty is admirable—but what appalling qualification for offering a "complete picture," as Gorer attempts to do, of Soviet Man!

Still another methodological pitfall in interpreting Soviet actions is the belief that an expert can avail himself of all the necessary facts, if he is truly objective and scholarly. That this is not so is illustrated by the cited works of Towster and Beloff—both are as elaborately annotated as its authors are "objective" and "scholarly." As the latter writer emphasizes himself, "the first point which must be made, and made as forcibly as possible, is that for very much of the history of Soviet foreign policy we still lack the factual information necessary before one can proceed to an analysis of motives." And nothing is as revealing about General Walter Bedell Smith's mature and sober *My Three Years in Moscow* as its author's enforced isolation from his Soviet environment and official

hosts. The result is the Ambassador's striking transformation from a diplomatic analyst to a journalist observer, his difference from a newspaper man being largely that of seeing Soviet leaders occasionally and having a trained staff of assistants, secretaries, and translators.

All this underscores a feature of analyzing the Soviet state which is frequently lost sight of: perhaps more than in any other area of intellectual analysis, unremediable factual gaps are apt to continue plaguing us. Moreover, this feature not only must be acknowledged, but it leads to a greater readiness to draw meaningful conclusions despite imperfect evidence. What happens if an expert either accepts the available evidence as adequate, or refuses to provide the missing links through independent analysis, is again illustrated by Towster's *Political Power in the U.S.S.R.*

To turn now to Soviet foreign policy, one particular interpretation was held widely during World War II. As Edward R. Stettinius, Jr., worded it in *Roosevelt and the Russians,* in a world "where objective conditions exist, people with different backgrounds and training can find a basis of understanding." It is evident from the memoirs of Roosevelt's highest associates and of his wife that the President shared the view, and that during the war he followed this assumption: although the USSR is unquestionably a dictatorship, it is probably working in its own way toward democratic ends, and Soviet policies can be decisively altered by Allied statesmanship.

The painful hindsight of postwar years has thrown much doubt on this, at the time, popular political assumption of the United States government. Yet the brief but widely discussed Quaker report on Russia, *The United States and the Soviet Union,* is permeated with its fervent reaffirmation: "renewed conviction that all men, irrespective of creed or cultural heritage, can come into possession of a new wisdom and a new tolerance, and that the unconquerable reaches of man's spirit can triumph even yet over those things which now divide us." To remain unfailingly hopeful for such universal amity is a laudable act of faith. But to project this hope into specific interpretations and recommendations —as the Quaker study does throughout—means to continue dealing with the world of those hopes, and not with the far less malleable planet of ours.

Furthermore, in analyzing Soviet behavior, how legitimate is the emphasis on statements made by Stalin and other Soviet leaders regarding the desirability and feasibility of coexistence and collaboration between the USSR and the non-Sovietized world? The Quaker report, for example, stresses that "in Stalin's speeches at Communist Party congresses ever since 1925 the first point of Soviet foreign policy has consistently been set forth as the preservation of peace and the strengthening of business relations with all countries." The most extensive studies on this question, however, contain evidence exactly to the contrary. Beloff's *Foreign Policy of Soviet Russia* concludes that "to try to comprehend the Soviet outlook and to

dismiss the inevitability of the world proletarian revolution is as idle as to try to comprehend the outlook of medieval man and to dismiss the reality of the Last Judgment." And in the exhaustive *Foreign Affairs* study of "Stalin on Revolution," Historicus—believed to be George A. Morgan, First Secretary of the United States embassy in Moscow—finds that "the passages in Stalin's various interviews in which he indicates the possibility or desirability of coexistence and cooperation between capitalist and Socialist systems do not really contradict the strategic aim of world revolution because they refer to a temporary tactic."

A related dubious analysis of Soviet policy is the view that, as Max Beloff describes it, "the Soviet Union was a State among States, pursuing clearly defined ends by the conventional methods of *realpolitik*." It is revealing that this view is often supported by those who, like President Roosevelt, have espoused either of the two preceding assumptions—the possibility of universal amity regardless of differences, and the preference of Soviet leaders for peaceful collaboration with the West. But the record prior to and since World War II tends to indicate conclusively that Soviet diplomacy is distinctly not guided by power-politics alone, that among its motive considerations are some that have no affinity whatever to the "conventional methods of *realpolitik*."

The question of Soviet policy cannot be dissociated from the question of public opinion in the USSR. In attempting to analyze the foundation of Soviet actions, an increasing number of writers are falling back upon the "national character" explanation. This explanation contends that Soviet policies reflect the age-old predilection of the population of Russia for autocracy, and its lack of experience or sympathy regarding Western political institutions. The Quaker report on Russia thus states of the most totalitarian features of Sovietism that "these elements were all part of the tsarist regime and have been characteristic of the Russian state for centuries." And Geoffrey Gorer, in his effort to prove—through swaddling customs!—the authoritarian nature of Soviet Man, writes: "the continuities between Czarist Russia appeared most striking; the contrasts, where they existed, between pre- and post-revolutionary Russia seemed like the contrasts between mirror images. . . ." Isaac Deutscher's *Stalin* tops it all off: "The nation over which Stalin took power might, apart from small groups of educated people and advanced workers, rightly be called a nation of savages."

One of the main attractions of this explanation of the Soviet state is that it contains a half-truth, although in precise historical terms it is certainly no more than that. An even greater attraction is the simplicity of the theory: if the Russian people don't know anything beside totalitarianism, that furnishes a delightfully easy and plausible explanation of why the Soviet state persists. Based as it is on historically unsupportable assumptions, this approach clearly obscures rather than illuminates the functioning of Soviet institutions.

The same is true of the thesis that Soviet rule is accepted peaceably and approvingly by the population, and that no discontent or disaffection can be foreseen. The implication of this thesis—as of the preceding one—is that the Soviet state, in the words of the revised edition of the standard text, *The Government of the Soviet Union,* can "claim to have strong roots in the hearts and the hopes of its people." Towster concludes that "the long emphasis on economic rights, associating welfare arrangements with liberty, has created a new popular conception of freedom, and the Soviet citizens are more eager for realization of these rights than for freedom to criticize or change the politbureau." This view is seconded by General Smith in *My Three Years in Moscow:* "In fact, the Soviet citizen today believes that he has the fruits of democracy."

It is of course self-evident that the Soviet government enjoys support from a segment of the population. But the most impressive available evidence contradicts much of both the just-quoted views and Geoffrey Gorer's recommendation that "it is useless to try to make friends with, or win the sympathy of, the mass of the Great Russian people, in the hope of producing transformations of policy."

Even if one chooses to overlook the constant series of local uprisings—the 1921 revolt of the Kronstadt sailors is the best known—and the stubborn peasant resistance to government-imposed "collectivization," there is most striking evidence of more recent origin about widespread Soviet dissatisfaction. What else would call for the unprecedented and ever growing Soviet police system, described with an astonishing wealth of detail in *Forced Labor in Soviet Russia* by two Russian socialist exiles, David J. Dallin and Boris I. Nicolaevsky? In what other fashion can one reasonably explain the huge wartime desertions of Soviet soldiers and civilians, impressively detailed in *Life* recently by Wallace Carroll, wartime European Director of OWI? Professor Merle Fainsod's first-hand descriptions for Harvard's Russian Research Center of the vast mass of Soviet "non-returners"—exiles who fled their homeland during or since World War II—certainly belies the cited opinions that active or passive opposition is beyond the reach or intention of the Soviet populace.

It is thus particularly indicative and regrettable that not one of the books discussed here mentions this extraordinary Soviet disaffection which occurred during and since World War II. Only such misconceptions and apathy can adequately explain the neglect by the democratic West of the incalculable political and informational potential of the thousands of recent Soviet exiles.

Lastly, a shortcoming of Western interpretations of the Soviet state has come recently from a "Marxist" source. This is Isaac Deutscher's impressive, broad-canvassed *Stalin.* Though expressing distaste for Soviet authoritarianism, Deutscher finds extenuating reasons for much of it. Particular use is made of a comparative historical approach, popularized by Professor Crane Brinton's *Anatomy of Revolu-*

tion (1938). In *Stalin* this approach leads to a seemingly plausible relativism, which in reality is both misleading and amoral. The vast difference in time, place, and techniques of these revolutions detracts much from the apparent validity of Deutscher's view that "Stalin belongs to the breed of great revolutionary despots, to which Cromwell, Robespierre, and Napoleon belonged."

As questionable both historically and morally is another of Deutscher's propositions. Here he suggests that probably only Stalin's methods could have so effectively industrialized and vitalized "Socialist" Russia and postwar Eastern Europe, and thus—as he says of Poland and Hungary—fulfilled "perhaps imperfectly, a dream of many generations of peasants and intellectuals." A positive dynamic—as distinguished from the sphere of institutionalized repression—is also ascribed to the USSR by *The Government of the Soviet Union:* "This mass move upwards from the very bottom of the Soviet pyramid is, together with the ever-present leadership of the Communist Party, the fundamental fact of Soviet life. It explains much of the crudities, toughness and vigor of the Soviet people, as well as their willingness to endure hardships which to most Westerners would be intolerable. . . ."

There is clearly more truth here than critics will often concede. But the key question remains: to what extent do these interpretations ascribe to the Soviet state an *a priori* rationalistic inner logic, which—however plausible it may appear to Western minds—actually greatly obscures its precise functioning?

An answer to this particular question would bring us much closer to our over-all query: the true nature of the Soviet state. For throughout the preceding discussion of present-day shortcomings in analyzing Sovietism, the main criticism has been one. That is the continuing failure—usually not traceable either to ill intent or Sovietophilia—to deal with the essence of Soviet power.

In the realm of methodology, a satisfactory analysis of the Soviet state has been retarded by two features: highly pedanticized canons of "objectivity," and the inability of scholars and even laymen to detach themselves sufficiently from their personal and theoretical assumptions in dealing with something as vastly different as the USSR.

In the case of both Soviet foreign policy and public opinion, the basic premise of most Western analyses is also *a priori* rationalistic. The assumption—explicit or unstated—tends to be that regardless of deviations and aberrations, man's private and collective conduct is governable by impulses and influences which are fundamentally alike.

The same premise is most frequently operative when Western students approach the complex problem of what the rationale, the inner logic of the Soviet system is. The standard answer —even from many bitter critics—again draws upon policies and methods which are familiar and understandable in the context of past Western experience. Thus even when an expert

speaks of the USSR as of an autocratic Leviathan, he usually turns to a rationalistic explanation. It may lie in the autocracy of pre-Soviet Tsarism, or in positive motive forces such as industrialization, "progressive social performance," use of nationalism or even religion, or "economic democracy."

All of these current interpretations contain much that is valid. This is as true of the least impressive studies discussed here, such as Gorer's *People of Great Russia,* as it is of the more competent ones. But none of them seem to treat adequately the key issue —a key issue particularly in a society where individual as well as social actions are more decidedly affected by it than by any other feature: that is the dynamic of the Soviet state. To the extent that this key issue is not grappled with, a radically different approach will be the only guarantee that the present mixture of misjudgments, half-truths and valid insights will be replaced by sounder analysis.

It is no accident that Western thought was also incapable of providing a satisfactory interpretation of the Nazi system in Germany—and continues to fail in this. Such failure is clearly indicated when scholarship is what it has become in the West, and particularly in the United States. Much of it is highly overcompartmentalized. Too many academicians have also become averse to the straining of insight and fantasy so requisite for a grasp of matters outside the realm of rational intellectual pursuit. And how could conventional analysis deal with either Hitler's Germany or Stalin's Russia, when in both instances—regardless of varying origins and aspirations—the world was presented with an unfathomably dissimilar rearrangement of all known political, psychological, social, and economic structures and interrelationships?

Specifically, understanding of the Soviet state must be grounded on an analysis of those new social constellations which were born of the uniquely twentieth-century coalescence of technology, with all its consequences, and an equally unprecedented form of faith-driven despotism.

The never equalled modern means of communication and armament, as well as the streamlined adumbration of "Machiavellian" politics and psychology, have made something possible that has never been feasible in modern times. This is the continuing functioning of a society which is based exclusively or largely on state repression and never-ceasing personal fear—and the likelihood that only a violent explosion can modify it in the foreseeable future.

There is growing evidence that the Soviet state is among the world's first such societies. This evidence may well not be conclusive, and the current interpretations criticized here might in the long run prove to be more valid. But while political scientists have not studied exhaustively what may be called Political Power in the Ice Age, and sociologists and psychologists do not forego methodological alchemy long enough to probe into the social structure of "Nineteen Eighty Four," an awesome suspicion must remain: is the West's analysis really that of the

Soviet state, or merely of a self-created caricature of it? And still more importantly—are the accumulated intellectual resources of free society incapable of understanding what at present is its major challenge?

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LABOR AND LIBERTY: A Note on Mr. Laski's Discourses

Despite an uncommon brilliance and felicitous pen, Harold Laski has never been an easy writer to analyze. The variations in doctrine from one book or group of books to another have regularly taxed the ingenuity of the reader who sought an inner consistency among his shifting patterns of thought. Of late, moreover, Mr. Laski has begun to intrude his several diversities into each book, arguing, for example, both the extreme individualistic principles of liberty and the Marxist dogma of economic collectivism. It is not entirely clear that these are compatible doctrines. Mr. Laski, after all these years, is still tormented by what Morris Cohen once called his "unavowed craving for absolute distinctions," and because of this he affirms contrary propositions with equal eloquence and, doubtless, sincerity. But the inclusion of opposites may produce not a synthesis but intellectual schizophrenia. Mr. Laski's two books, *Liberty in the Modern State*[1] and *Trade Unions in the New Society*,[2] illustrate the difficulty.

This is not to say that Mr. Laski's volumes are lacking in acuteness of insight or cogency of analysis. On the contrary, the qualities that have long set Mr. Laski apart from the mediocre are here displayed in rich and telling form. Mill and Milton apart, I know of no more incisive argument for freedom of the mind, and no more devastating exposition of the evils of suppression. There are passages in *Liberty in the Modern State* on the relation of administrative activities to civil liberties, on the necessity of constitutional guarantees and the separation of the judiciary from the executive, inattentive power and the conditions that make for rebellion, that are pregnant with meaning for those of us who cherish freedom. Mr. Laski is firmly convinced that reason and the demonstrated incapacity of aristocracies dictate democracy. I share that conviction; hence I applaud his argument and welcome the republication of his book.

However, it is important to realize that while Mr. Laski is on the side of the angels, his central ideas as to the nature and implications of liberty are by no means free of ambiguity or confusion. Despite the opportunity afforded him by a new edition to revise injudicious pronouncements, Mr. Laski still means by liberty two disparate things. On the one hand, he agrees with Hobbes that liberty is simply the absence of restraint. On the other hand, he defines it as the absence of restraint on the necessary conditions of individual happiness. These are not merely dissimilar; they involve Mr.

[1]Rev. ed., Viking, 1949. $2.75.
[2]Viking, 1949. $3.

Laski in a basic contradiction that does much to vitiate his entire thesis.

If liberty is the absence of restraint, then all law is an invasion of liberty and men are free only in the absence of, or to the extent that they successfully disobey, the law. But restraints are also imposed by men and organizations other than the government, as when a bully prevents a man from crossing the street, in which case restraint of the bully becomes a necessary condition of that man's liberty. Thus law enters as a restraint on a restraint; it is a restriction of some kinds of liberty in order to realize other kinds of liberty. Law (as a restraint) and liberty are not antithetic but complementary, for complete liberty is a meaningless and impossible thing. There are many kinds and degrees of liberty, and all cannot be realized at the same time by an individual or a society. To regard law as a deprivation of liberty is to look upon liberty as an absolute concept. It is more sensible to conceive of law as a necessary restriction of some liberties in order to guarantee others. The problem then becomes one of a choice of liberties, *and of restraints.*

Mr. Laski appears to recognize this truth when he argues that men "are free whenever the rules under which they live leave them without a sense of frustration in realms they deem significant." But under this conception, the slave who is satisfied with slavery is free; which is an absurdity. Nor does it help to relate liberty, as Mr. Laski does, to other conditions, for example, economic security, equality, knowledge. Obviously some men are free and perhaps happy though economically insecure. They may be free even though ignorant. And any system of equalities necessitates a system of restraints. Such restraints may further certain liberties, but in no sense do they provide *complete* freedom.

Basic to Mr. Laski's difficulties, I think, are two misconceptions. One is his desire to equate liberty with an ideological goal such as happiness. But man is not necessarily happier if restraints are absent. He may treasure certain liberties which are made possible only by the imposition of restraints. The nature of liberty, moreover, is confused rather than clarified by identifying it with some other notion of the good; for if liberty means anything it is the right to choose between notions of the good, in which case my liberty may lead me to unheavenly pastures.

The other and more fundamental error underlying Mr. Laski's treatment of liberty is his persistent refusal to abandon absolute alternatives and his regard for liberty as a totality. For Mr. Laski, the choice is between good and evil, freedom and slavery, and there is rarely a middle ground. Yet it is overwhelmingly clear that liberty conceived as a totality can have no relevance to the world in which we live. Hobbes's difficulty was not in his definition but in the implications he drew from that definition. Liberty is the absence of restraint, but *liberties,* paradoxically, can only be assured by the intrusion of *restraint.* Liberty, to have meaning, must be seen not as a totality but as a system of liberties and

restraints. Mr. Laski's failure to realize this simple truth leads him into an uncomfortable dilemma: he wants the individual to be free yet he wants the state to deny the individual his right, say, to possess private property, at least in the means of production. Now this latter desire may be wise or foolish, but it cannot be justified in the name of liberty. It has meaning only in a system of liberties, in which restraints enter to limit some kinds of liberty so as to assure the existence of other kinds of liberty.

I had hoped that Mr. Laski's more recent book, *Trade Unions in the New Society*, in treating the relationship of the union to the individual, the employer, and the government, might illumine some of these aspects of the problem of liberty. Unfortunately, much of this problem is overlooked. Mr. Laski believes that government in what he calls a capitalist democracy will always enter a labor dispute on the side of the employer. This is in accord with his conviction that those who control economic power necessarily control political power. Consequently he is anxious that workers combine into unions — indeed he would provide no legal protection for the worker unwilling to join a union —and that the unions form the economic base of a political party which will capture control of the state.

This conception raises a number of important questions. Mr. Laski is undeniably right when he argues that "the worker who is freed from his trade union is thereby left in servitude to his employer," but is it not equally true that the worker who is forced into a union is thereby denied his freedom to choose and may be subjected to restraints he may deem intolerable? Such an infringement of the anti-union workers' liberties might be defended on the ground that where we have democratic unions with no membership restrictions such workers would in all likelihood be a very small minority, and that the infringement of their freedoms would be counterbalanced by the guarantee of conditions making for fuller liberties for the multitude of other workers. In taking this position, Mr. Laski in effect admits the idea of liberty as a system of liberties and restraints and selects that equilibrium of freedoms and controls that will give him the liberties he prizes most.

Throughout, Mr. Laski rightly insists upon democracy within the trade union. However, it might have helped considerably if he had gone on to examine in greater detail the conditions under which democracy can be established and maintained in the trade union, as Robert Michels in his *Political Parties* examined the conditions under which labor oligarchies arise and tend to prevail. Tyranny may exist within a labor union no less than in a political government, and Mr. Laski demonstrates his awareness of this when he attacks the benevolent despot in trade unionism. However, one might well question the consistency that allows him bitterly to condemn Mr. Lewis and Mr. Petrillo as undemocratic while in the same breath he lauds Sidney Hillman as one of the greatest American labor leaders; for if internal democracy is lacking in the

musicians' and miners' unions, it can hardly be said to have found a firm home in the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America.

No less important is the problem of freedom for the worker when his union is the core of a political party in control of the government. Despite an excessive affection for certain features of Soviet structure and practice —such as "the democratization of culture"—Mr. Laski is not eager to establish in his new society the kind of trade union that is completely subservient to the monolithic state. His model is, broadly, socialist England, not totalitarian Russia. But the English experience has made clear that when trade union leaders take government positions they cease to be labor leaders and give their primary allegiance to the state. Thus, in the event of a clash of interests between labor and the government, the unions from which these leaders emerged are faced with the embarrassing and difficult choice of repudiating their former leaders or surrendering their claims.

This is not to deny the long range identity of interest between a labor party and the trade unions that are central to its being. However, not only are there likely to be clashes on immediate policies or tactics, there is at least one perennial problem of major significance. This is the relation of the union to management in a nationalized industry. Mr. Laski seeks to resolve this problem by setting up a series of rules designed to integrate such unions into management's line of communication. Notable by its absence, however, is any rule which would preserve the union as the agency to press for the redress of members' grievances. Does Mr. Laski thereby imply that once an industry is nationalized, its union will cease to fight for labor's objectives when these are in conflict with the goals of management? This conception of unionism, which I hope Mr. Laski does not accept, comes dangerously close to the pattern of trade unionism in the USSR. Clearly it obliterates the freedom of the worker for whom the union is presumed to speak.

In a world in flux liberty cannot remain a static thing. It must shift with the times and constantly adjust to changing circumstances. It is well, therefore, to have a reappraisal of the problems of liberty, and of the relations of trade unions to free society, in our own day. That Mr. Laski has failed to resolve all the questions that seem to us most pressing, may, in the long run, be less important than the fact that he has raised vital issues and has demonstrated a devotion to the cause of freedom that all men may well emulate.

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